

COLLECTED POEMS

JAMES STEPHENS

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COLLECTED POEMS

BY  
JAMES STEPHENS

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THE CHARWOMAN'S DAUGHTER  
THE CROCK OF GOLD  
DEIRDRE  
THE DEMI-GODS  
HERE ARE LADIES  
THE HILL OF VISION  
IN THE LAND OF YOUTH  
THE INSURRECTION IN DUBLIN  
IRISH FAIRY TALES  
POEMS  
A POETRY RECITAL  
REINCARNATIONS  
SONGS FROM THE CLAY  
THE ROCKY ROAD TO DUBLIN  
COLLECTED POEMS

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COLLECTED  
POEMS  
OF  
JAMES STEPHENS



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THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1926

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TO  
GEORGE W. RUSSELL  
Æ  
WITH HOMAGE AND AFFECTION,



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## PREFACE

A CHRONOLOGICAL order in the printing of verse is useful as showing the growth of technique, and perhaps also in demonstrating the maturing of emotion and thought in a writer: but the lack of sequence in mood and subject consequent on such a method can be distressing to the reader. I have thought best, therefore, to arrange these poems in subject-sequence, as indicated by the sub-titles to the sections into which this book is divided.

I have discarded a great number of poems for the very best of reasons, but I have retained some that were lately almost universally condemned. For example, the twenty-six-word arpeggio beginning—He wills to be alone with thee—and a tiny balancing measure entitled *The Main Sea Deep*.

It is said that this is the day of the lyric, and the fact that it has been said indicates some displeasure on the part of those who made the discovery. A considerable part of our discoveries are only brought into consciousness by reason of the annoyance which they first, unconsciously, visited upon us. When we examine the sense of exasperation and thwarting that is ex-

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pressed on the subject of literature it is well to recollect that every other art is evolving in the same way, and is evoking the same distress among its adepts and votaries.

The world-interest today differs notably from that which gave it enthusiasm and stability in the past, for, within the last thirty years the tempo of the whole world has been enormously accelerated. It is still accelerating, and the technique that we inherited, in whatever art, from a leisured society is not equal to the demands that are now made upon it, and which demands are still incoherent if not unconscious. We must evolve a new technique or we must continue to compose and paint and write in the only form that can deal with an interim situation, or with speed—the lyrical form.

A revival of epic is not to be wished; nor, while the general mind is steeped in what is practically a new element, is such a revival possible. Epic will only deal with matured, with thoroughly absorbed, mental or spiritual cognitions. It comes at the end of an era, and is a summary, or a reduction to mythological form, of all that its era meant. We are at the beginning of an era, and who creates a new world must create a new art to express it. Already a large proportion of the writings that we call classical have lost their authority, and that not by being outmoded. It is not time but

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change that is consigning these to oblivion. Another mind than that they reckoned with is consigning them to oblivion, and thumbs may be turned down to all that could interest and excite the elite of only a generation ago.

It is almost terrifying to consider upon how slight a basis of agreement and tact are founded all our ideas of art or philosophy or, even, religion, and how small a universal change could transform these out of all recognition. The change that man makes without him is summed in the mind, and must at some time recognise itself. But occultations of whatever nature are not to be over-mourned. The earth is not the poorer for the lost leaves of yesteryear; nor, whatever he seems to lose, will man really suffer a deprivation. The earth, and he—what they have they hold, and all their phases are normal.

Having been discovered, lyric, like everything else that is thus "found out," must fall into disrepute, and may indeed join the arts that were lost before it—epic, tragedy, romance, gaiety: lost arts all! And, for a time, until a norm of experience is re-established, prose must do the world's work, and we may, perhaps confidently, expect a prose renaissance.

Here there is cause for speculation. We cannot foresee the means whereby prose can renew itself. Nothing that is outworn or overborne can salve itself



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by its own virtue, for, were that virtue capable, it had not been overborne. It may only be retrieved by the assault of a competitive antagonist. The transcription of action for the sake of action lies upon all prose like a veritable disease. As a subject, action can achieve a really amazing cleverness; and it is probable that the prose writing of the world has never been so clever or so various as it is today. But, also, prose writing has never been so mentally lazy as it is today, and the lack of fundamental brain-work, so evident in our novelists and essayists, is not compensated for by their as evident agility. By taking over the story of action the cinema will force prose to reconsider its means, and to discover its special or latent aptitudes. This taking-over seems inevitable.

A whole series of modes belong to lyrical poetry: they compose the infinity which art requires, and within which the lyrical poet may consider that there is nothing whatever which he cannot do. Lacking the feeling of power which this infinity provides an artist is helpless. (It may be said that the lyrical poet is undisputed master of all the *extremes* that can be expressed in terms of time or speed or tempo.) No pen but his can hold excessive velocity or excessive slowness—A swift lyrical line is as quick as lightning; a slow one can be slower than a snail: and it is only in these

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difficult regions, distant regions, that the poet can work with ease and certainty.

All normal speeds are properly in the care of the prose-writer, and it might be held that the greatest glory of a prose-writer is to be pedestrian. His problems, technically, are more numerous and more difficult than are those that engage his lyrical and epical brethren. The matter under discription is, for the prose-writer, a complete interest. He cannot depart from it; nor treat it disrespectfully; nor overlook any of its parts. To observe his matter, to analyse it, and, if he can, to ornament it, is his whole duty. Like the scientist he can refuse to be interested in God, or in any abstract matter whatever, on condition that he is thoroughly interested in matter and its modes. And, in this sphere, the perfection that he can arrive at, or aim at, is as splendid as is that of any other artist.

The poet needs not to observe or analyse in the sense that a prose-writer must, for his business does not lie with details or parts. He will apprehend and generalise. His apparent matter is not of final consequence; it needs not even to be of intrinsic interest, and it may be no more for him than a ground of departure and arrival. That which he adds to the formal matter is not liable to definition although it is obvious and an object of knowledge. Nor is poetry amenable to criticism in the sense that prose is, for prose can be criti-

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cised even when it is good, but only bad poetry (if there be such a thing) can be halted for examination. It may be said that the poet energises matter more highly than prose can manage, and that it is this excess of energy which we recognise as poetry. The duty of a lyrical poet is not to express or explain, it is to intensify life, and its essence is properly indefinable.

The epic poet differs in both technique and content from these other artists; and, as used by him, the blank-verse form is incomparably the subtlest, the greatest, instrument that literary art has evolved. The matter that can be submitted to this form must be the gravest that the mind can conceive, and, naturally, the most intensely comprehended. It must also be a matter that can be held, as it were, stationery. All speeds are at rest in this form. We may not ask at what pace it moves, nor require any movement whatever from it. It is always deeply religious. It is always romantic or truth-telling. Nothing, in human terms, has been finally uttered until it has been said in blank-verse, or its equivalent in whatever language.

A lyrical movement in prose is a disfiguring intruder in that art. A lyrical interruption in blank-verse is just as unhappy. In either event, the additional matter fashions a relief that is unpleasant because it is unnecessary: imposing, in the one case, a pace that makes

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prose seem under-vitalised, and adding, in the other, an activity that cannot but appear trivial.

There is an affinity between blank-verse and prose. As an aristocrate may, without loss of dignity, take on certain aspects of his peasantry, so blank-verse or epic can neighbour prose if it wishes to do so. But, in either of these cases, the converse can not happen. The peasant can, indeed, learn something of fine or subtil manners from his aristocratic contemporary, and the prose-writer can learn the same if he will humbly, that is, affectionately, study epic. If workers in prose did this they could almost afford to study nothing else.

—JAMES STEPHENS.

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BOOK I  
IN GREEN WAYS





## THE GOAT PATHS

(1)

The crooked paths  
Go every way  
Upon the hill  
—They wind about  
Through the heather,  
In and out  
Of a quiet  
Sunniness.

And the goats,  
Day after day  
Stray  
In sunny quietness;  
Cropping here,  
And cropping there  
—As they pause,  
And turn,  
And pass—  
Now a bit

COLLECTED POEMS

Of heather spray,  
Now a mouthful  
Of the grass.

(2)

In the deeper  
Sunniness;  
In the place  
Where nothing stirs;  
Quietly  
In quietness;  
In the quiet  
Of the furze  
They stand a while;  
They dream;  
They lie;  
They stare  
Upon the roving sky.

If you approach  
They run away!  
They will stare,  
And stamp,  
And bound,  
With a sudden angry sound,  
To the sunny  
Quietude:

IN GREEN WAYS

To crouch again,  
Where nothing stirs,  
In the quiet  
Of the furze.  
To crouch them down  
Again,  
And brood,  
In the sunny  
Solitude.

(3)

Were I but  
As free  
As they,  
I would stray  
Away  
And brood;  
I would beat  
A hidden way,  
Through the quiet  
Heather spray,  
To a sunny  
Solitude.

And should you come  
I'd run away!  
I would make an angry sound,

COLLECTED POEMS

I would stare,  
And stamp,  
And bound  
To the deeper  
Quietude;  
To the place  
Where nothing stirs  
In the quiet  
Of the furze.

(4)

In that airy  
Quietness  
I would dream  
As long as they:  
Through the quiet  
Sunniness  
I would stray  
Away  
And brood,  
All among  
The heather spray  
In a sunny  
Solitude



IN GREEN WAYS

(5)

—I would think  
Until I found  
Something  
—I can never find  
Something  
Lying  
On the ground,  
In the bottom  
Of my mind.

COLLECTED POEMS

THE FIFTEEN ACRES

(1)

I cling and swing  
On a branch, or sing  
Through the cool clear hush of morning O!

Or fling my wing  
On the air, and bring  
To sleepier birds a warning O!

That the night's in flight!  
And the sun's in sight!  
And the dew is the grass adorning O!

And the green leaves swing  
As I sing, sing, sing:  
Up by the river,  
Down the dell,  
To the little wee nest,  
Where the big tree fell,  
So early in the morning O!

IN GREEN WAYS

(2)

I flit and twit  
In the sun for a bit,  
When his light so bright is shining O!

Or sit, and fit  
My plumes, or knit  
Straw plaits for the nest's nice lining O!

And she, with glee,  
Shows unto me,  
Underneath her wing reclining O!

And I sing that Peg,  
Has an egg, egg, egg!  
Up by the oat-field,  
Round the mill;  
Past the meadow,  
Down the hill;  
So early in the morning O!

(3)

I stoop and swoop  
On the air, or loop  
Through the trees, and then go soaring O!

COLLECTED POEMS

To group, with a troop,  
On the skiey poop,  
While the wind behind is roaring O!

I skim and swim  
By a cloud's red rim;  
And up to the azure flooring O!

And my wide wings drip,  
As I slip, slip, slip,  
Down through the rain-drops,  
Back where Peg  
Broods in the nest  
On the little white egg,  
So early in the morning O!

## IN GREEN WAYS

### THE RIVALS

I heard a bird at dawn  
Singing sweetly on a tree,  
That the dew was on the lawn,  
And the wind was on the lea;  
But I didn't listen to him,  
For he didn't sing to me!

I didn't listen to him,  
For he didn't sing to me  
That the dew was on the lawn  
And the wind was on the lea!  
I was singing at the time,  
Just as prettily as he!

I was singing all the time,  
Just as prettily as he,  
About the dew upon the lawn,  
And the wind upon the lea!  
So I didn't listen to him,  
As he sang upon a tree!

COLLECTED POEMS

FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW

Follow! Follow!! Follow!  
Blackbird, thrush and swallow!  
The air is soft, the sun is dancing through  
The dancing boughs;  
A little while me company along  
And I will go with you.  
Arouse! Arouse!  
Among the leaves I sing my pleasant song.

Sky! Sky! On high! Oh gentle majesty!  
Come all ye happy birds and follow, follow!  
Under the slender interlacing boughs,  
Blackbird, thrush and swallow!  
No longer in the sunlight sit and drowse  
But me accompany along;  
No longer be ye mute!  
Arouse! Arouse!  
Among the leaves I sing my pleasant song.

Lift, lift, ye happy birds! Lift song and wing;  
And sing and fly; and fly again, and sing  
Up to the very blueness of the sky  
Your happy words!  
O Follow! Follow! Follow!



## IN GREEN WAYS

Where we go racing through the shady ways,  
Blackbird, thrush and swallow,  
Shouting aloud our ecstasy of praise!  
Under the slender interlacing boughs  
Me company along;  
The sun is coming with us!  
Rouse! O Rouse!  
Among the leaves I sing my pleasant song.

COLLECTED POEMS

MINUETTE

(1)

The moon shines,  
And the wind blows,  
And the heart knows,

Carelessly, and carelessly!  
That to them each thing inclines,  
And that everything is free!

All that is, is given to thee!  
Take the love, that comes and goes!  
Uncomplaining, thankless, be,

As the moon, the bird, the rose,  
Thankless, uncomplaining, are  
Beauty, Music, and a Star!

(2)

Call, and come, and come, and call!  
Nothing is denied the gay!  
All to each, and each to all,

Fall, and flow, and go away;  
As the moon shines, and the heart knows;  
Carelessly, as the wind blows!

## IN GREEN WAYS

Not for duty we fulfill  
Lovely motions—'tis for naught!  
All the will of good and ill,

All of ignorance, and thought,  
All are harmless, if we are  
Free as Wind, and Rose, and Star.

### (3)

Taking all of cherishing  
That befall, or may not fall,  
As a happy, chancing, thing,

Some for each, and all for all;  
Taking all the haps that be  
Carelessly, and carelessly!

Life comes on, with not a word!  
Love is love, on no demand!  
Death, unasked, hath him bestirred,

Lifting all up by the hand!  
All that fall he stoops above  
Lovingly, for he is Love!

### (4)

Love is round, and round, and round!  
Everywhere, in every spot,  
It is lost, and it is found,

COLLECTED POEMS

Here it is—and here is not!  
Man, and beast, and bird, and snake,  
Take, and take, and take, and take,

As the Moon takes up the sight!  
As the Rose takes up the shower!  
As the Heart takes all Delight,

Might and Beauty for its dower!  
All that is—for all is free—  
Take carelessly, and carelessly.

IN GREEN WAYS

AND IT WAS WINDY WEATHER

Now the winds are riding by;  
Clouds are galloping the sky;

Bush and tree are lashing bare,  
Savage boughs on savage air!

Crying, as they lash and sway,  
—Pull the roots out of the clay!

Lift away: away:  
Away!

Leave security, and speed  
From the root, the mud, the mead!

Into sea, and air, we go!  
To chase the gull! the Moon! and know,

—Flying high!  
Flying high!—

All the freedom of the sky!  
All the freedom of the sky!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### DANCE

(1)

Left and right and swing around!  
Soar and dip and fall for glee!  
Happy sky, and bird, and ground!  
Happy wind, and happy tree!

Happy minions, dancing mad!  
Joy is guide enough for you;  
Cure the world of good and bad;  
And teach us innocence anew!

(2)

Good and bad and right and wrong!  
Wave the silly words away!  
This is wisdom—to be strong!  
This is virtue—to be gay!

Let us sing and dance, until  
We shall know the final art;  
How to banish good and ill  
With the laughter of the heart!

## IN GREEN WAYS

### THE CENTAURS

Playing upon the hill three centaurs were!  
They lifted each a hoof! They stared at me  
And stamped the dust!

They stamped the dust! They snuffed  
    upon the air!  
And all their movements had the  
    fierce glee  
Of power, and pride, and lust!

Of power and pride and lust! Then,  
    with a shout,  
They tossed their heads, and wheeled,  
    and galloped round,  
In furious brotherhood!

In furious brotherhood! Around, about,  
They charged, they swerved, they  
    leaped! Then, bound on bound,  
They raced into the wood!



## COLLECTED POEMS

### THE CRACKLING TWIG

There came a satyr creeping through  
the wood,  
His hair fell on his breast, his legs  
were slim:  
His eyes were dancing wickedly, he  
stood,  
He peeped about on every side of  
him.

He danced! He peeped! But, at a sound  
I made,  
A crackling twig, he turned; and,  
suddenly,  
In three great jumps, he bounded to  
the shade,  
And disappeared among the greenery!

## IN GREEN WAYS

### IN THE NIGHT

There always is a noise when it is dark!  
It is the noise of silence, and the noise  
Of blindness!

The noise of silence, and the noise of  
blindness  
Do frighten me!  
They hold me stark and rigid as a tree!

These frighten me!  
These hold me stark and rigid as a tree!  
Because at last their tumult is more loud  
Than thunder!

Because  
Their tumult is more loud than thunder,  
They terrify my soul! They tear  
My heart asunder!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### THE LARK

There is a small bird cowering in the dark;  
His wing is broken, he will no more sing;  
He will not fly, nor sing again, the lark  
With a broken wing!

The bird that cowers with a broken wing  
Is all alone—His mate has gone away:  
In the morrow, in the sun, in the field, his  
mate will sing  
Her wonted lay.

In the dew, in the limpid dawn, in the ray  
Of the sun, she'll sing the comrade gone  
Who will not cheer a sunny day  
Again for any one.

. . . . .

All panic looks and listens with his eyes!  
He is all fear! He is no more a lark!  
Only the heart dares stir of him that lies  
In the dark!

## IN GREEN WAYS

### THE SNARE

I hear a sudden cry of pain!  
There is a rabbit in a snare:  
Now I hear the cry again,  
But I cannot tell from where.

But I cannot tell from where  
He is calling out for aid!  
Crying on the frightened air,  
Making everything afraid!

Making everything afraid!  
Wrinkling up his little face!  
As he cries again for aid;  
—And I cannot find the place!

And I cannot find the place  
Where his paw is in the snare!  
Little One! Oh, Little One!  
I am searching everywhere!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### LITTLE THINGS

Little things, that run, and quail,  
And die, in silence and despair!

Little things, that fight, and fail,  
And fall, on sea, and earth, and air!

All trapped and frightened little things,  
The mouse, the coney, hear our prayer!

As we forgive those done to us,  
—The lamb, the linnet, and the hare—

Forgive us all our trespasses,  
Little creatures, everywhere!

## IN GREEN WAYS

### LOVERS

The moon is shining on the sea!  
Every night the moon looks down  
Through the spaces, quietly:  
And, no matter though I be  
Among the houses of the town,  
Something always says to me,  
—The moon is shining on the sea—

Along the boulevard I pace,  
Looking for her through the trees,  
And I see her gentle face  
Beaming through immensities:  
And, as I look, there comes to me  
The lonely murmur of the sea.

All across all that is space  
They are telling their distress;  
They are looking, face to face,  
All longing, and all loneliness;  
The pretty, timid, moon, and the  
Poor, unhappy, little sea.

COLLECTED POEMS

CHILL OF THE EVE

A long green, swell  
Slopes soft to the sea;  
And a far-off bell  
Swings sweet to me;  
As the grey  
Chill day  
Slips away  
From the lea.

Spread cold and far,  
Without one glow  
From a mild pale star,  
Is the sky's steel bow;  
And the grey  
Chill day  
Slips away  
Below.

Yon green tree grieves  
To the air around;  
And the whispering leaves  
Have a lonely sound;



IN GREEN WAYS

As the grey  
Chill day  
Slips away  
From the ground.

And dark, more dark,  
The shades settle down;  
Far off is a spark  
From the lamp-lit town;  
And the grey  
Chill day  
Slips away  
With a frown.

COLLECTED POEMS

THE SHELL ✓

(1)

And then I pressed the shell  
Close to my ear,  
And listened well.

And straightway, like a bell,  
Came low and clear  
The slow, sad murmur of far distant seas,

Whipped by an icy breeze  
Upon a shore  
Wind-swept and desolate.

It was a sunless strand that never bore  
The footprint of a man,  
Nor felt the weight

Since time began  
Of any human quality or stir,  
Save what the dreary winds and wave incur.

(2)

And in the hush of waters was the sound  
Of pebbles, rolling round;  
For ever rolling, with a hollow sound:

## IN GREEN WAYS

And bubbling sea-weeds, as the waters go,  
Swish to and fro  
Their long cold tentacles of slimy grey;

There was no day;  
Nor ever came a night  
Setting the stars alight

To wonder at the moon:  
Was twilight only, and the frightened croon,  
Smitten to whimpers, of the dreary wind

And waves that journeyed blind . . .  
And then I loosed my ear—O, it was sweet  
To hear a cart go jolting down the street!

COLLECTED POEMS

THE MAIN-DEEP

The long-rólling,  
Steady-póuring,  
Deep-trenchéd  
Green billów:

The wide-topped,  
Unbróken,  
Green-glacid,  
Slow-sliding,

Cold-flushing,  
—On—on—on—  
Chill-rushing,  
Hush—hushing,

. . . Hush—hushing. . . .

## IN GREEN WAYS

### THE COUNTY MAYO

Now, with the coming in of the spring, the  
days will stretch a bit;  
And after the Feast of Brigid I shall hoist  
my flag and go:  
For, since the thought got into my head, I  
can neither stand nor sit  
Until I find myself in the middle of the  
County of Mayo.

In Claremorris I should stop a night to sleep  
with decent men;  
And then I'd go to Balla, just beyond, and  
drink galore;  
And next I'd stay in Kiltimagh for about a  
month; and then  
I should only be a couple of miles away  
from Ballymore!

I say and swear that my heart lifts up like  
the lifting of a tide;  
Rising up like the rising wind till fog or  
mist must go,

COLLECTED POEMS

When I remember Carra, and Gallen close  
beside,  
And the Gap of the Two Bushes, and the  
wide plains of Mayo.

To Killaden then, to the place where every-  
thing grows that is best;  
There are raspberries there, and strawberries  
there, and all that is good for men;  
And were I only there, among my folk, my  
heart would rest,  
For age itself would leave me there, and I'd  
be young again.

## IN GREEN WAYS

### SPRING

1916

#### I

Do not forget my charge, I beg of you;  
That of what flowers you find, of fairest hue  
And sweetest odour, you do gather those  
Are best of all the best—

A fragrant rose;  
A tall calm lily from the waterside;  
A half-blown poppy, hanging at the side  
Its head of dream,  
Dreaming among the corn;  
Forget-me-nots, that seem  
As though the morn  
Had tumbled down, and grew into the clay;  
And buds that sway,  
And swing along the way,  
Easing the hearts of those who pass them by  
Until they find contentment—

Do not cry!  
But gather buds! And, with them, greenery



## COLLECTED POEMS

Of slender branches taken from a tree  
Well bannered by the Spring that saw them fall:

And you, for you are cleverest of all,  
Who have slim fingers and are pitiful!  
Brimming your lap with bloom that you may cull,  
Will sit apart, and weave for every head  
A garland of the flowers you gathered.

## II

Be green upon their graves, O happy Spring!  
For they were young and eager who are dead!  
Of all things that are young, and quivering  
With eager life, be they remembered!  
They move not here! They have gone to the clay!  
They cannot die again for liberty!  
Be they remembered of their land for aye!  
Green be their graves, and green their memory!

Fragrance and beauty come in with the green!  
The ragged bushes put on sweet attire!  
The birds forget how chill these airs have been!  
The clouds bloom out again in limpid fire!  
Blue dawns the day! Blue calm lies on the lake,  
And merry sounds are fitful in the thorn!  
In covert green the young blackbirds awake;  
They shake their wings, and sing upon the morn.

## IN GREEN WAYS

At springing of the year you came and swung  
Green flags above the newly-greening earth;  
Scarce were the leaves unfolded, they were young,  
Nor had outgrown the wrinkles of their birth:  
Comrades they thought you of their pleasant hour,  
Who had but glimpsed the sun when they saw you!  
Who heard your song ere birds had singing power,  
And drank your blood ere they drank of the dew.

Then you went down! And then, and as in pain,  
The Spring, affrighted, fled her leafy ways!  
The clouds came to the earth in gusty rain!  
And no sun shone again for many days!  
And day by day they told that one was dead!  
And day by day the season mourned for you!  
Until that count of woe was finished,  
And Spring remembered all was yet to do!

She came with mirth of wind and eager leaf;  
With scampering feet and reaching out of wings;  
She laughed among the boughs and banished grief,  
And cared again for all her baby things:  
Leading along the joy that has to be!  
Bidding her timid buds think on the May!  
And told, that Summer comes—with victory!  
And told the hope that is all creatures' stay.

## COLLECTED POEMS

Go Winter now unto your own abode,  
Your time is done, and Spring is conqueror!  
Lift up with all your gear and take your road!  
For she is here, and brings the sun with her!  
Now are we born again, and now are we,  
—Wintered so long beneath an icy hand!—  
New-risen into life and liberty,  
Because the Spring is come into our land!

### III

In other lands they may,  
With public joy or dole along the way,  
With pomp, and pageantry, and loud lament

Of drums and trumpets; or with merriment  
Of grateful hearts, lead into rest and sted  
The nation's dead.

If we had drums and trumpets! If we had  
Aught of heroic pitch, or accent glad,  
To honour you—as bids tradition old—

With banners flung, or draped in mournful fold,  
And pacing cortege! These should we not bring  
For your last journeying!

## IN GREEN WAYS

We have no drums or trumpets! Naught have we,  
But some green branches taken from a tree,  
And flowers that grow at large in mead and vale!

Nothing of choice have we! Nor of avail  
To do you honour, as our honour deems,  
And as your worth beseems!

Wait, drums and trumpets, yet a little time!  
All ends, and all begins! And there is chime  
At last where discord was! And joy, at last,

Where woe wept out her eyes! Be not downcast!  
Here is prosperity and goodly cheer,  
For life does follow death! And death is here!

## IV

Joy be with us, and honour close the tale!  
Now do we dip the prow, and shake the sail,  
And take the wind, and bid adieu to rest!

With gladness now we re-begin the quest  
That destiny commands! Though where we go  
Or guided by what star, no man doth know!

Unchartered is our course! Our hearts untried!  
And we may weary ere we take the tide,  
Or make fair haven from the moaning sea.

COLLECTED POEMS

Be ye propitious, winds of destiny!  
On us at first blow not too boisterous bold!  
All Ireland hath is packed into this hold!

Her hopes fly at the peak! Now, at the dawn,  
We sail away—Be with us Mananán!

IN GREEN WAYS

SONG, I AM TIRED TO DEATH

Song! I am tired to death! Here let me lie  
Where we have paced the moving trees along!  
Till I recover from my ecstasy,  
Farewell, my Song!

Once more unto your pipe I lend my rhyme,  
Who went in woodland ways with you along!  
We have been happy for a little time!  
Farewell, my Song!

Soon, soon, return, or all my life is naught!  
Come soon, and we will pace the woods along;  
And tell unto each other all our thought!  
Farewell, my Song!

And when, again, you do come back to me,  
Under the sounding trees we'll pace along:  
While to your pipe I raise my poesy:  
Farewell, my Song!





BOOK II  
A HONEYCOMBE



## TO THE QUEEN OF THE BEES

Bee! tell me, whence do you come?  
Ten fields away, twenty perhaps,  
Have heard your hum.

If you are from the north, you may  
Have passed my mother's roof of straw  
Upon your way.

If you came from the south, you should  
Have seen a little cottage just  
Inside a wood.

And should you go back that way, please  
Carry a message to the house  
Among the trees.

Say—I shall meet her at the rock  
Beside the stream, this very night  
At eight o'clock.

And ask your queen, when you get home,  
To send my queen the present of  
A honeycombe.

## COLLECTED POEMS

### LESBIA

Sweet,  
And delicate,  
And rare,

At the end  
Of a wind-blown fragrant bough,  
The apple swings!

If I,  
Who fly no more,  
Had wings!

Or if  
My wizardry  
Knew how!

I'd wing  
To where that sweetness swings,  
—At the end of the bough!

## A HONEYCOMBE

MARY HYNES

(1)

She is the sky  
Of the sun!  
She is the dart  
Of love!

She is the love  
Of my heart!  
She is a rune!  
She is above

The women  
Of the race of Eve  
As the sun  
Is above the moon!

(2)

Lovely and airy  
The view from the hill  
That looks down  
Ballylea!

COLLECTED POEMS

But no good sight  
Is good, until  
By great good luck  
You see

The Blossom  
Of the Branches  
Walking towards you,  
Airily!

A HONEYCOMBE

THE WOOD OF FLOWERS

I went to the Wood of Flowers,  
No one went with me;  
I was there alone for hours;  
I was happy as could be,  
In the Wood of Flowers!

There was grass  
On the ground;  
There were leaves  
On the tree;

And the wind  
Had a sound  
Of such sheer  
Gaiety,

That I  
Was as happy,  
As happy could be,  
In the Wood of Flowers!

COLLECTED POEMS

PEGGY MITCHELL

As lily grows up easily,  
In modest, gentle dignity,  
To sweet perfection,  
—So grew she,  
As easily!

Or as the rose,  
That takes no care,  
Will open out, on sunny air,  
Bloom after bloom  
Fair after fair;  
Just so did she,  
—As carelessly!

She is our torment without end!  
She is our enemy, our friend!  
Our joy, our woe!  
And she will send  
Madness, or glee,  
To you, or me,  
—And endlessly!



SWEET APPLE

At the end of the bough!  
At the top of the tree!  
—As fragrant, as high,  
And as lovely, as thou—  
One sweet apple reddens,  
Which all men may see,  
—At the end of the bough!

Swinging full to the view!  
Though the harvesters now  
Overlook it, repass it,  
And pass busily:  
Overlook it!  
Nay, pluck it!  
They do not know how!

For it swings out of reach  
Like a cloud! And as free  
As a star; or thy beauty,  
That seems too, I vow,  
Remote as the sweet apple swinging  
—Ah me!  
At the end of the bough!

COLLECTED POEMS

THE CANAL BANK

I know a girl,  
And a girl knows me,  
And the owl says, what!  
And the owl says, who?

But what we know  
We both agree  
That nobody else  
Shall hear or see;

It's all between herself and me:  
To wit? said the owl,  
To woo! said I,  
To-what! To-wit! To-woo!

## A HONEYCOMBE

### THE COOLIN

Come with me, under my coat,  
And we will drink our fill  
Of the milk of the white goat,  
Or wine if it be thy will.

And we will talk, until  
Talk is a trouble, too,  
Out on the side of the hill;  
And nothing is left to do,

But an eye to look into an eye;  
And a hand in a hand to slip;  
And a sigh to answer a sigh;  
And a lip to find out a lip!

What if the night be black!  
Or the air on the mountain chill!  
Where the goat lies down in her track,  
And all but the fern is still!

Stay with me, under my coat!  
And we will drink our fill  
Of the milk of the white goat,  
Out on the side of the hill!

COLLECTED POEMS

NANCY WALSH

It is not on her gown  
She fears to tread;  
But on her hair  
That tumbles down  
And strays  
About her ways.

And she lives nigh this place!  
The dead would rise  
Only to see her face!  
The dead would rise  
To hear her sing!

We would leave behind  
Both wife and child,  
And house and home;  
And wander blind,  
And wander thus,  
And ever roam,  
If she would come to us  
In Erris.

Softly she said to me  
—Be patient till the night comes,  
And I will go with thee.

## A HONEYCOMBE

### THE DAISIES

In the scented bud of the morning O,  
When the windy grass went rippling far!  
I saw my dear one walking slow  
In the field where the daisies are.

We did not laugh, and we did not speak,  
As we wandered happily, to and fro,  
I kissed my dear on either cheek,  
In the bud of the morning O!

A lark sang up, from the breezy land;  
A lark sang down, from a cloud afar;  
As she and I went, hand in hand,  
In the field where the daisies are.

## COLLECTED POEMS

### IN WOODS AND MEADOWS

Play to the tender stops, though cheerily!  
Gently my soul, my song! Let no one hear!  
Sing to thyself alone! Thine ecstasy  
Rising in silence to the inward ear  
That is attuned to silence! Do not tell  
A friend, a bird, a star, lest they should say

—He danced in woods and meadows all the day,  
Waving his arms; and cried, as evening fell,  
“Oh, do not come!  
And cried, “O, come, thou queen!  
And walk with me unwatched upon the green  
Under the sky!”

A HONEYCOMBE

THE RED MAN'S WIFE

After great fire  
Great frost  
Comes following!

Turgesius was lost  
By the daughter of Maelscheachlin,  
The King,

By Grainne,  
Of high Ben Gulbain in the north,  
Was Diarmuid lost!

The strong sons of Uisneac,  
Who never submitted,  
They fell by Deirdre!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### THE BUDS

Now I can see  
The buds are green again  
On every tree.

Through the dear intercourse of sun and dew,  
Of thrilling root, and folding earth, anew  
They come, in beauty.

They up to the sun,  
As on a breast, are lifting every one  
Green leaves.

Under the eaves  
The sparrows and the swallows  
Are in love.

There is a chatter in the woods above,  
Where the grim crow  
Is telling what his sweetheart wants to know.

For the sun  
Is shining fair,  
And the green  
Is on the tree;



A HONEYCOMBE

And the wind  
Is everywhere  
Whispering  
So urgently!

You will die  
Unless you do  
Find a mate  
To whisper to.

COLLECTED POEMS

NANCY WALSH

I, without bite or sup,  
If thou wert fated for me,  
I would up  
And would go after thee  
Through mountains!

A thousand thanks from me  
To God have gone,  
Because I did not lose my senses to thee,  
Though it was hardly I escaped from thee,  
O Ringleted One!

A HONEYCOMBE

GEOFFREY KEATING

O woman full of wiliness!  
Although for love of me you pine,  
Withhold your hand adventurous,  
It holdeth nothing holding mine.

Look on my head, how it is grey!  
My body's weakness doth appear;  
My blood is chill and thin; my day  
Is done, and there is nothing here.

Do not call me a foolish man,  
Nor lean your lovely cheek to mine:  
O slender witch, our bodies can  
Not mingle now, nor any time.

Then take your mouth from mine, your hand  
From mine, ah, take those lips away!  
Lest thought should ripe to willing, and  
All this be grave that had been gay.

It is this curl, a silken nest,  
And this grey eye, bright as the dew,  
And this round, lovely, snow-white breast  
That draws desire in search of you.

COLLECTED POEMS

I would do all for you, meseems,  
But this, tho' this were happiness!  
I shall not mingle in your dreams,  
Of woman full of wiliness!

A HONEYCOMBE

GREEN WEEDS

To be not jealous, give not love!  
Rate not thy fair all fair above,  
Or thou'lt be decked in green, the hue  
That jealousy is bounden to.

That lily hand! Those lips of fire!  
Those dewy eyes that spill desire!  
Those mounds of lambent snow, may be  
Found anywhere it pleaseth thee

To turn! Then turn, and be not mad  
Though all of loveliness she had:  
—She hath not *all* of loveliness!  
A store remains, wherewith to bless

The bee, the bird, the butterfly,  
And thou! Go, search with those that fly  
For that, which thou shalt easy find  
On every path, and any wind!

Nor dream that she be Seal and Star  
Who is but as her sisters are!  
And whose reply is, Yes and No,  
To all that come, and all that go.

COLLECTED POEMS

—I love!—Then love again, my friend;  
Enjoy thy love, without an end!—  
—I love . . . Ah, cease! Know what is what,  
Thou dost not love, if she love not!

For if thou truly loved her  
From thee away she could not stir!  
But, ever at thy side, would be  
Thy self, and thy felicity!

Go, drape thee in the greeny hue!  
Thou art not Love! She is not True!  
And, no more need be said—Adieu!

THE END OF THE ROAD

This is a thing is true,  
Everything comes to an end!  
The loving of me and you,  
The walking of friend and friend!

Shall I weep the greatness I knew!  
Or the beauty, gathered away!  
Or the truth that is only true  
As the things that a man will say?

The child and the mother will die!  
The wife and husband sever!  
The sun will go out of the sky!  
And the rain will be falling for ever!

For ever! Until the waves rear  
To the skies, with a terrible tune!  
And cover the earth and the air!  
And wash up the beach of the moon!

Then go, for all things must end!  
And this is true, as I say—  
A friend will be leaving a friend!  
And a man will be going away!

COLLECTED POEMS

MARY RUANE

The sky-like girl that we knew!  
She dressed herself to go to the fair  
In a dress of white and blue;

A white lace cap, and ribbons white  
She wore in her hair;  
—She does not hear in the night

Her mother crying for her, where  
Down, deep, in the sea,  
She rolls, and lingers, to and fro,

Unweariedly!



THE WATCHER

A rose for a young head,  
A ring for a bride,  
Joy for the homestead  
Clean and wide  
—Who's that waiting  
In the rain outside?

A heart for an old friend,  
A hand for the new:  
Love can to earth lend  
Heaven's hue  
—Who's that standing  
In the silver dew?

A smile for the parting,  
A tear as they go,  
God's sweethearting  
Ends just so  
—Who's that watching  
Where the black winds blows?

He who is waiting  
In the rain outside,

COLLECTED POEMS

He who is standing  
Where the dew drops wide,  
He who is watching  
In the wind must ride

—Tho' the pale hands cling—  
With the rose, and the ring,  
And the bride  
Must ride,  
With the red of the rose,  
And the gold of the ring,  
And the lips and the hair of the bride.

## A HONEYCOMBE

### TO THE TREE

Ballad! I have a message you must bear  
Unto a certain tree! I may not tell  
Where she abides; only, she is more fair  
Than any tree that grows down in a dell;  
Or on a mountain top; or by a well;  
Or as the lovely sentinel beside  
A brimming stream! No words can speak her well;  
Nor lyric song enough her arms so wide;  
Her grace, her peace, her innocence, her happy pride!

Come, Ballad, quickly back to me again,  
When that you have delivered to the tree  
My humble service; and if she will deign  
To trust you with a message back, then see,  
Most strictly, you forget no word that she  
May speak to you! No smallest yes or no!  
And what she looked like when she spoke of me!  
And if she begged you stay or bade you go!  
Or hesitated, ere she said—what you shall know!

Say—I shall visit her ere day be done;  
When the flushed evening blanches to the dark;

## COLLECTED POEMS

When one last ray of all that was the sun  
Rests on her topmost branches! When the lark  
Dips to the dew-drenched grasses in the park,  
And sends but rare, from dusky fields below,  
A sleepy song! Then, swift as to the mark  
An arrow flies, so swiftly will I go,  
Nor stay until her branches wide I halt below.

Of every tree most beautiful and queen!  
The blossom of the wood lives in her glee!  
About her feet the forest folk are seen!  
The timid nymph bends there a ready knee!  
And Pan himself, morose, unwillingly,  
Yet all perforce, must stoop before her grace!  
And round about, in a wild ecstasy,  
The light-foot satyrs—stayed from an embrace—  
Stare shamefully, and dance, and mince, with antic  
pace.

Fortress of melody! Well hidden heart!  
Deep bosomed lady whom I love so well!  
Dear solitude of singer without art!  
Sweet shadiness wherein I long to dwell,  
Enrapt and comforted from any spell  
Of thought, or care, or woefulness, or sin!  
Or trouble which a man may not foretell!  
Or slothful ease which it is death to win!  
Or fear that cometh at the last and creepeth in!

## A HONEYCOMBE

If you among her little leaves will fly,  
And what they whisper bring to me again  
Dear Ballad, I will write your history  
Upon a sheepskin with a golden pen!  
It shall be read by women and by men!  
Each youth will sing it to his paramour,  
As they go roving in the evening, when  
All joy is innocence, and love is lore!  
And you, and youth, and love, will live for evermore!

## ENVOI

Ballad, farewell! go tell her that I burn!  
Say that I die if she withdraw from me!  
And I shall wait and sigh till you return,  
And plague the god of life and love to favour me.

## COLLECTED POEMS

### DEIRDRE

Do not let any woman read this verse!  
It is for men, and after them their sons,  
And their son's sons!

The time comes when our hearts sink utterly;  
When we remember Deirdre, and her tale,  
And that her lips are dust.

Once she did tread the earth: men took her hand;  
They looked into her eyes and said their say,  
And she replied to them.

More than two thousand years it is since she  
Was beautiful: she trod the waving grass;  
She saw the clouds.

Two thousand years! The grass is still the same;  
The clouds as lovely as they were that time  
When Deirdre was alive.

But there has been again no woman born  
Who was so beautiful; not one so beautiful  
Of all the women born.

## A HONEYCOMBE

Let all men go apart and mourn together!  
No man can ever love her! Not a man  
Can dream to be her lover!

No man can bend before her! No man say—  
What could one say to her? There are no words  
That one could say to her!

Now she is but a story that is told  
Beside the fire! No man can ever be  
The friend of that poor queen!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### FOSSILS

And then she saw me creeping!  
Saw and stood  
Transfixed upon the fringes of the wood,  
And straight went, leaping!

Headlong, down the pitch  
Of the curved hill!  
Over the ditch,  
And through the skirt of bushes by the rill  
She pelted screaming!

Swerved from the water, sideways, with a twist,  
Just as I clutched—  
And missed!

Flashed white beneath my hand, and doubled back,  
Swift as a twisting hare upon her track,  
Hot for the hill again!  
But all in vain!

Her hair swung far behind!  
Straight as a stream balanced upon the wind!



A HONEYCOMBE

Oh, it was black! Dipped  
In the dregs of midnight, with a spark  
Caught from a star, that smouldered in the dark!

It I gripped!  
Drew for a moment tight!  
Jerked, with a victor's cry,  
Down in the grasses high  
Her to the hot brown earth and threatened—daft—

And then!  
. . . She laughed!

COLLECTED POEMS

A WOMAN IS A BRANCHY TREE

A woman is a branchy tree  
And man a singing wind;  
And from her branches carelessly  
He takes what he can find:

Then wind and man go far away,  
While winter comes with loneliness;  
With cold, and rain, and slow decay,  
On woman and on tree till they

Droop to the earth again, and be  
A withered woman, a withered tree;  
While wind and man woo in the glade  
Another tree, another maid.

THE RED-HAIRED MAN'S WIFE

I have taken that vow!  
And you were my friend  
But yesterday—Now  
All that's at an end;  
And you are my husband, and claim me, and I must  
depend!

Yesterday I was free!  
Now you, as I stand,  
Walk over to me  
And take hold of my hand;  
You look at my lips! Your eyes are too bold, your  
smile is too bland!

My old name is lost;  
My distinction of race!  
Now, the line has been crossed,  
Must I step to your pace?  
Must I walk as you list, and obey, and smile up in  
your face?

All the white and the red  
Of my cheeks you have won!  
All the hair of my head!

COLLECTED POEMS

And my feet, tho' they run,  
Are yours, and you own me and end me, just as I  
begun!

Must I bow when you speak!  
Be silent and hear;  
Inclining my cheek  
And incredulous ear  
To your voice, and command, and behest; hold your  
lightest wish dear!

I am woman! But still  
Am alive, and can feel  
Every intimate thrill  
That is woe or is weal:  
I, aloof, and divided, apart, standing far, can I kneel?

Oh, if kneeling were right,  
I should kneel nor be sad!  
And abase in your sight  
All the pride that I had!  
I should come to you, hold to you, cling to you, call  
to you, glad!

If not, I shall know,  
I shall surely find out!  
And your world will throw

## A HONEYCOMBE

In disaster and rout!

I am woman, and glory, and beauty; I, mystery, terror  
and doubt!

I am separate still!

I am I and not you!

And my mind and my will,

As in secret they grew,

Still are secret; unreached, and untouched, and not  
subject to you.

## COLLECTED POEMS

### WHY TOMAS CAM WAS GRUMPY

If I were rich what would I do?  
I'd leave the horse just ready to shoe;  
I'd leave the pail beside the cow;  
I'd leave the furrow beneath the plough;  
I'd leave the ducks, tho' they should quack,  
"Our eggs will be stolen before you're back";  
I'd buy a diamond brooch, a ring,  
A chain of gold that I would fling  
Around her neck. . . . Ah, what an itch,  
If I were rich!

What would I do if I were wise?  
I would not debate about the skies;  
Nor would I try a book to write;  
Or find the wrong in the tangled right;  
I would not debate with learned men  
Of how, and what, and why, and when;  
—I'd train my tongue to a linnet's song,  
I'd learn the words that couldn't go wrong—  
And then I'd say . . . And win the prize,  
If I were wise!

But I'm not that nor t'other, I bow  
My back to the work that's waiting now:

## A HONEYCOMBE

I'll shoe the horse that's standing ready;  
I'll milk the cow if she'll be steady;  
I'll follow the plough that turns the loam;  
I'll watch the ducks don't lay from home:  
—And I'll curse, and curse, and curse again  
Till the devil joins in with his big amen;  
And none but he and I will wot  
When the heart within me starts to rot;  
To fester and churn its ugly brew  
. . . Where's my spade! I've work to do!

COLLECTED POEMS

LIGHT-O'-LOVE

And now, at last, I must away,  
But if I tend another fire  
In some man's house this you will say  
—It is not that her love doth tire:  
This is the price she has to pay,  
For bread she gets no other way,  
Still dreaming of her heart's desire.

And so she went out from the door  
While I sat quiet, in my chair:  
She ran back once, again—no more . . .  
I heard a footstep on the stair!  
A lifted latch! One moment fleet  
I heard the noises of the street,  
Then silence booming everywhere!



## A HONEYCOMBE

### THE DANCER

I will not dance!  
I say I will not dance.  
Your audience! Pah! Let them go home again,  
Sleek, ugly pigs! Am I to hop and prance  
As long as they will pay!  
And posture for their eyes! And lay  
My womanhood before them! Let them drain  
Their porter-pots and snuffle—I'll not stay!

For he is dead!  
I tell you he is dead!  
My God, did you not hear me say it  
Twice already? I held his groaning head  
In these remembering arms;  
And cursed the charm  
That could not stop his going. Must I bay it  
Like a dog to you! Quit your alarms!

They shout and stamp!  
Then, let them shout and stamp,  
Those booted hogs and lechers! I'm away  
To sit beside my dead! O God! You tramp

COLLECTED POEMS

Upon me, too; and twine  
More sorrows round me than are mine.  
With holy unconcern . . . Don't bar my way!  
I'm going to my dead . . . ! Ah, stamping swine!

A HONEYCOMBE

NORA CRIONA

I have looked him round and looked him through,  
Know everything that he will do

In such a case, and such a case;  
And when a frown comes on his face

I dream of it, and when a smile  
I trace its sources in a while.

He cannot do a thing but I  
Peep to find the reason why;

For I love him, and I seek,  
Every evening in the week;

To peep behind his frowning eye  
With little query, little pry,

And make him, if a woman can,  
Happier than any man.

—Yesterday he gripped her tight  
And cut her throat—and serve her right!

PEADAR OG GOES COURTING

Now that I am dressed I'll go  
Down to where the roses blow,  
I'll pluck a fair and fragrant one  
And make my mother pin it on:  
Now she's laughing, so am I—  
Oh the blueness of the sky!

Down the street, turn to the right,  
Round the corner out of sight;  
Pass the church and out of town—  
Dust does show on boots of brown,  
I'd better brush them while I can  
—Step out, Peadar, be a man!

Here's a field and there's a stile,  
Shall I jump it? wait a while,  
Scale it gently, stretch a foot  
Across the mud in that big rut  
And I'm still clean—faith, I'm not!  
Get some grass and rub the spot.

Dodge those nettles! Here the stream,  
Bubbling onward with a gleam

## A HONEYCOMBE

Steely white, and black, and grey,  
Bends the rushes on its way—  
What's that moving? It's a rat  
Washing his whiskers; isn't he fat?

Here the cow with the crumpleddy horn  
Whisks her tail and looks forlorn  
She wants a milkmaid bad I guess,  
How her udders swell and press  
Against her legs—And here's some sheep;  
And there's the shepherd, fast asleep.

This is a sad and lonely field,  
Thistles are all that it can yield;  
I'll cross it quick, nor look behind,  
There's nothing in it but the wind:  
And if those bandy-legged trees  
Could talk they'd only curse or sneeze.

A sour, unhappy, sloppy place—  
That boot's loose! I'll tie the lace  
So, and jump this little ditch,  
. . . *Her father's really very rich:*  
*He'll be angry*—There's a crow,  
Solemn blackhead! Off you go!

There a big, grey, ancient ass  
Is snoozing quiet in the grass;

COLLECTED POEMS

He hears me coming, starts to rise,  
Wags his big ears at the flies:  
    . . . *What'll I say when*—There's a frog,  
Go it, long-legs—jig, jig-jog.

*He'll be angry, say—"Pooh, pooh,  
Boy, you know not what you do!"  
Shakespeare stuff and good advice,  
Fat old duffer—Those field mice  
Have a good time playing round  
Through the corn and underground.*

*But her mother is friends with mine,  
She always asks us out to dine,  
And dear Nora, curly head,  
Loves me; so at least she said.  
    . . . Damn that ass's hee-hee-haw—  
Was that a rabbit's tail I saw?*

*This is the house, Lord, I'm afraid!  
A man does suffer for a maid.  
    . . . How will I start? The graining's new  
On the door—Oh pluck up, do.  
Don't stand shivering there like that  
    . . . The knocker's funny—Rat-tat-tat.*

## A HONEYCOMBE

### THE SOOTHERER

O Little Joy, why do you run so fast  
Waving behind you as you go away  
Your tiny hand? You smiled at me and cast  
A silver apple, asking me to play:  
But when I ran to pick the apple up  
You ran the other way.

Little One! White One! Shy Little Gay Sprite!  
Do you turn your head across your shoulder  
To mock at me? It is not right  
That you should laugh at me, for I am older:  
Throw me the silver apple once again  
You little scolder.

I love you dearly, dearly, yes I do!  
I never saw a girl like you before  
In any place! You are more sweetly new  
Than a May Moon! You are my Store,  
My Secret and my Treasure and the Pulse  
Of my Heart's Core!

Throw me the silver apple—I will run  
To pick it up and give it you again:

COLLECTED POEMS

Dear Heart! Sweet Laughter! Throw it then for fun  
And not for me—If you will but remain!

. . . Nay do not run; I'll stand thus far away  
And not complain.

. . . Never before—or only one or two;  
I did not like them nearly half so well,  
Not half of half so well as I like you;  
Throw me the silver apple and I'll tell  
Their names, and what I used to say to them,  
—The first was Nell.

Throw me the apple, and I'll tell you more;  
—She had a lovely face, but she was fat:  
We clung together when the rain would pour  
Under a tree or hedge, and often sat  
Through long, still, sunny hours—Tell what she said?  
I'll not do that.

I really couldn't, no, it would be wrong  
Caddish, unfair; I will not say a word  
Of any girl—Your voice is like the song  
I heard this morning from a soaring bird  
. . . I'll whisper then if you come close to me,  
—You've hardly stirred!

She said she loved me better than her life!  
—You need not laugh, she said so anyway,



## A HONEYCOMBE

And meant it too, and longed to be my wife:  
She kissed me many times, and wept to stay  
Within my arms, and did not ever want  
To go away.

But she was fat, I will admit that's true:  
And so I hid when she came seeking me.  
If she had been as beautiful as you . . . !  
You are as slender as a growing tree,  
And when you move the blood goes leaping through  
The heart of me.

The other girl? Yes, she is very fair!  
Her feet are lighter than the clouds on high;  
And there is morn and noonday in her hair;  
And mellow sunny evenings in her eye;  
And all day long she sings just like a lark  
Up in the sky.

I say she did—she loved me very well,  
And I loved her until—ah, woe is me!  
Until to-day, when passing through the dell  
I came on you, and now I cannot see  
Her face at all, or any face but yours  
In memory.

I ought to be ashamed! Well, amn't I?  
But that's no comfort when I'm in a trap:

COLLECTED POEMS

I tell you that I'll sit down here and die  
Unless you stay—You do not care a rap—  
Ah, Little Sweetheart, do not run away!  
. . . Have pity on a chap!

You'll go—Then listen—you are just a pig,  
A little wrinkled pig out of a sty;  
Your legs are crooked and your nose is big;  
You've got no calves; you've got a silly eye;  
I don't know why I stopped to talk to you;  
I hope you'll die.

Now cry, go on, mew like a little cat,  
And rub your eyes and stamp and tear your wig;  
I see your ankles! Listen, they are fat,  
And so's your head. You're angled like a twig.  
Your back's all baggy, and your clothes don't fit,  
And your feet are big!

She's gone! Bedad, she legged it like a hare!  
You'd think I had the itch, or had a face  
Like a blue monkey—Keeps me standing there,  
Not good enough to touch her . . . ! Back I'll race  
And make it up with Breed, that's what I'll do,  
. . . *There is a flower that bloometh,*  
*Tra la la la laddy la. . .*

SHAME

I was ashamed! I dared not lift my eyes!  
I could not bear to look upon the skies!  
What I had done! sure, everybody knew!  
From everywhere hands pointed where I stood,  
And scornful eyes were piercing through and through  
The moody armour of my hardihood!

I heard their voices too, each word an asp  
That buzz'd and stung me sudden as a flame!  
And all the world was jolting on my name!  
And now and then there came a wicked rasp  
Of laughter, jarring me to deeper shame!

And then I looked, and there was no one nigh!  
No eyes that stabbed like swords or glinted sly!  
No laughter creaking on the silent air!  
—And then I saw that I was all alone  
Facing my soul! And next I was aware  
That this mad mockery was all my own!

COLLECTED POEMS

THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME

She watched the blaze,  
And so I said the thing I'd come to say,  
Pondered for days.

Her lips moved slow,  
And the wide eye she flashed on me  
Was sudden as a blow.

She turned again,  
Her hands clasped her knees, and did not speak  
—She did not deign.

And I, poor gnome!  
A chided cur crawls to a hole to hide!  
. . . I toddled home!

## A HONEYCOMBE

### EVE

Long ago, in ages grey,  
I was fashioned out of clay:  
Builded with the sun and moon,  
Kneaded to a holy tune;  
And there came to me a breath  
From the House of Life and Death.

Then the sun roared into fire!  
And the moon, with swift desire,  
Leaped among the starry throng,  
Singing on her journey long!  
And I climbed up from the sod,  
Holding to the hand of God.

In a garden fair and wide,  
Looking down a mountain side,  
Prone I lay; and felt the press  
Of Immensity's caress;  
There I lived a space, and knew  
What All Power meant to do.

Till upon a day there came  
Down to me a voice of flame,

COLLECTED POEMS

—Thou the corner-stone of man,  
Rise, and set about my plan,  
Nothing doubting—for a guide  
I have quickened in thy side.—

From the garden wide and fair;  
From the pure and holy air;  
Down the mountain side I crept,  
Stumbling often, ill-adept!  
Feeling pangs of woeful bliss;  
Rounding from the primal kiss!

Then from out my straining side  
Came the son who is my guide:  
Him I nursed through faithful days,  
Till I faltered at his gaze,  
Staring boldly, when he saw  
I was woman, life and law.

Life and law and dear delight!  
I the moon upon the night  
All alluring! I the tree  
Growing nuts of mystery!  
I the tincture and the dew  
That the apple reddens through!

Weaving Life and Death I go!  
Building what I do not know!

## A HONEYCOMBE

Planting, though in sore distress,  
Gardens in the wilderness!  
Palaces too big to scan  
By the little eye of man!

Still the sun roars out in fire!  
And the moon with pale desire  
Keeps the path appointed her  
In the starry theatre!  
Sun and moon and I are true  
To the work we have to do.





BOOK III  
IN THE TWO LIGHTS



## THE PIPER

Shepherd! While the lambs do feed,  
Do not sulk beneath a tree!  
But upon your oaten reed,  
Pipe us merrily!

Though it rain do not forbear!  
Sun and rain are from the sky;  
Pipe a silly, merry, air  
Till the shower passes by.

The sun will come again in gold!  
Pipe us merrily until  
Evening brings the lambs to fold  
—You may weep then, if you will.

COLLECTED POEMS

AN EVENING FALLS

(1)

At eve the horse is freed of plough or wain,  
And turns from labour into yearned rest!

The scattered sheep are gathering home again!  
The crow is winging to a loved nest:

And to the den, in hedge or hill, once more  
Go all who may:

(2)

Each mother listens now! Each is aware  
That little feet have paused in field or street;

And she will hear  
A knocking at the door.

And open it,  
And see her children there!

## IN THE TWO LIGHTS

### HESPERUS

(1)

Upon the sky  
Thy sober robes are spread;

They drape the twilight,  
Veil on quiet veil;

Until the lingering daylight all has fled  
Before thee, modest goddess, shadow-pale!

The hushed and reverent sky  
Her diadem of stars has lighted high!

(2)

The lamb, the kid, the bird, the tender fawn,  
All that the sunburnt day has scattered wide,

Thou dost regather; holding, till the dawn,  
Each flower and tree and beast unto thy side:

The sheep come to the pen;  
And dreams come to the men;

And, to the mother's breast,  
The tired children come, and take their rest.

COLLECTED POEMS

(3)

Evening gathers everything  
Scattered by the morning!

Fold for sheep, and nest for wing;  
Evening gathers everything!

Child to mother, queen to king,  
Running at thy warning!

Evening gathers everything  
Scattered by the morning!

## IN THE TWO LIGHTS

### THE HOLY TIME

(1)

Like timid girls the shades are pacing down  
The slopes of evening, trailing soberly  
Their vestments grey:

Far, far away,  
The last, red tinge  
Is fading into brown;

So far!  
So faint!  
Seen but surmisingly!

And now the dusk of evening draws upon  
That memory of light,  
And light is gone!

(2)

The bee  
Speeds  
Home!

COLLECTED POEMS

The beetle's  
Wing of horn  
Is booming by!

The darkness,  
Every side,  
Gathers around

On air,  
And sky,  
And ground!

The trees  
Sing on the darkness,  
Far and wide,

In cadenced lift of leaves,  
A tale of morn!  
And the moon's circle,

Silver-faint, and thin,  
Birds lovely on the earth:  
—There is no sin!



## IN THE TWO LIGHTS

### PORTOBELLO BRIDGE

Silver stars shine peacefully!  
The Canal is silver! The

Poplars bear, with modest grace,  
Gossamers of silver lace!

And the turf bank wears with glee  
Black and silver filigree!

COLLECTED POEMS

BLUE STARS AND GOLD

While walking through the trams and cars  
I chanced to look up at the sky,  
And saw that it was full of stars!

So starry-sown! A man could not,  
With any care, have stuck a pin  
Through any single vacant spot.

And some were shining furiously;  
And some were big and some were small;  
But all were beautiful to see.

Blue stars and gold! A sky of grey!  
The air between, a velvet pall!  
I could not take my eyes away!

And there I sang this little psalm  
Most awkwardly! Because I was  
Standing between a car and tram!

IN THE TWO LIGHTS

DONNYBROOK

I saw the moon, so broad and bright,  
Sailing high on a frosty night!

And the air shone silvery between  
The pearly queen, and the silver queen!

And here a white, and there a white  
Cloud-mist swam in a mist of light!

And, all encrusted in the sky,  
High, and higher, and yet more high,

Was gold and gold that glimmered through  
The hollow vault, the vault of blue:

And then I knew—that God was good,  
And the world was fair! And, where I stood,

I bent the knee, and bent the head;  
And said my prayers, and went to bed.

## COLLECTED POEMS

### SLÁN LEATH

And now, dear heart, the night is closing in:  
The lamps are not yet ready; and the gloom  
Of this sad winter evening, and the din  
The wind makes in the street fills all the room.

You have listened to my stories—Seumas Beg  
Has finished the adventures of his youth,  
And no more hopes to find a buried keg  
Stuffed to the lid with silver! He, in truth,

And all alas, grew up! But he has found  
The path to newer romance, and with you  
May go seek wonders. We are bound  
To the whirl and storm of things, and all is new!

Give me your hand! So, keeping close to me,  
Shut tight your eyes! Step forward!  
. . . Where are we!

## IN THE TWO LIGHTS

### THE PAPS OF DANA

The mountains stand, and stare around  
They are far too proud to speak!

Altho' they are rooted in the ground,  
Up they go—peak after peak,

Beyond the tallest house; and still  
Climbing over tree and hill,

Until you'd think they'd never stop  
Going up, top over top,

Into the clouds—Still I mark  
That a linnet, thrush or lark,

Flying just as high, can sing  
As if he'd not done anything!

I think the mountains ought to be  
Taught a little modesty!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### AUTUMN

#### (1)

It may be on a quiet mountain-top,  
Or in a valley folding among hills  
You take your path; and often you will stop

To hear the chattering of pleasant rills;  
The piping of a wind in branches green;  
The murmuring of widely-lifted spray

As the long boughs swing; or hear the twittering  
Of drowsy birds, when the great sun is seen  
Climbing the steep of darkness to the day.

#### (2)

The lovely moon trailing a silver dress  
By quiet waters! Each living star  
Moving apart in holy quietness,

Sphere over golden sphere, moving afar,  
These I can see:  
And the unquiet zone,

Rolling in snow along the edge of sight:  
The world is fair indeed; and I am free  
To see its beauty; and to be

IN THE TWO LIGHTS

In solitude; and quite forget, and quite  
Lose out of memory all I have known  
But this.

(3)

Straying apart in sad and mournful way;  
Alone, or with my heart for company:  
Keeping the tone of a dejected day,

And a bewilderment that came to me;  
I said—The Spring will never come again,  
And there is the end of everything—

Day after day  
The sap will ebb away,  
From the great tree,

And, when the sap is gone,  
All piteously  
She'll tumble to the clay:

And we say only—Such, or such a one  
Had pleasant shade  
But there is end of her—

(4)

And you, and even you, the year  
Will drain and dry,  
And make to disappear!

COLLECTED POEMS

Then in my heart there came so wild a stir;  
And such great pity and astonishment;  
And such a start of fear and woe had I,

That where I went I did not know!  
And only this did know,  
That you could die!

(5)

I would have liked to sing from fuller throat  
To you who sang so well; but here I stay,  
Resting the music on a falling note;

And hear it die away, and die away,  
With beauty unrehearsed,  
And life and love unsung.

For I had clung,  
—With what of laughter and of eagerness!—  
Unto the hope that I might chance to be

Master of Song! And, singing, be no less  
Than those great poets of antiquity,  
Who sang of clouds and hills; of stars and clods;

Of trees and streams; and the mind and soul of man;  
And chaunted too the universal gods,  
And love that is or ever time began;



## IN THE TWO LIGHTS

And did not fail before a theme  
Although  
It passed the reason.

(6)

I heard a bird sing in the woods to-day  
A failing song:  
The times had caught on him!

In autumn boughs he tried a wonted lay;  
And was abashed to find his music grim  
As the crow's song.

Then, when I raised an air  
To comfort him,  
I wretched was to hear

The crow did croak  
And chatter everywhere  
Within my ear.

(7)

And so,  
Behold!  
I am a saddened elf!

And, as a deer  
Flies timidly to shade,  
I fly to laughter and I hide myself!

COLLECTED POEMS

And couch me in the coverts that I made  
Against those bold ambitions,  
And forswear

The palm, the prize, or what of gear instead  
A poet gets with his appointed share  
Of beer and bread.

(8)

Upon the grass I drop this tuneful reed,  
And turn from it aside! And turn from more  
That I had fancied to be mine indeed,  
Beyond all reclamation. See the door

Set in the boundary wall yawns windily!  
It will be shut when I have wandered through!  
And open will no more again for me  
This side of life, whatever thing I do!

And so good-bye! And so good-night to you!  
And farewell all! Behold the lifted hand!  
And the long last look upon the view!  
And the last glimpse of that most lovely land!

And thus away unto the mundane sphere,  
And look not back again nor turn anew,  
And hear no more that laughter at the ear!  
And sing no more to you.

## IN THE TWO LIGHTS

### IN GREEN WAYS

(1)

Now the time has come to sing  
In the service of the Spring,  
I will lift a note, and call  
Bird and beast to madrigal.

But o'er vale and mountain-shelf,  
In the wood, the plain, the glade,  
Spring is singing for herself,  
Singing without any aid!

You can do without my aid!  
So I need not sing for you!  
Singing is my only trade!  
What the deuce am I to do!

(2)

Among the leaves I'll make a rhyme,  
To the winter in its pall,  
For the poor forgotten time  
Has not had a song at all.

Winter! Winter! Do not fear!  
You shall wear an icy crown  
At the falling of the year  
When the leaves are tumbled down!

COLLECTED POEMS

I am singing to you here,  
Where the buds break on the tree!  
At the falling of the year  
You shall sing a song to me!

## IN THE TWO LIGHTS

### THE WIND

The wind stood up, and gave a shout;  
He whistled on his fingers, and

Kicked the withered leaves about,  
And thumped the branches with his hand,

And said he'll kill, and kill, and kill;  
And so he will! And so he will!

COLLECTED POEMS

WHEN THE LEAVES FALL

The leaves fall slowly from the trees  
And everybody walks on them:  
Once they had a time of ease  
In limpid air, and bird and breeze  
Stayed a while to talk with them.

Bright they were, and debonair  
As they fluttered up and down;  
Dancing in the sunny air,  
Dancing without knowing there  
Was a gutter in a town.

Now they have no place at all!  
All the home that they can find  
Is a gutter by a wall;  
And the wind that waits their fall  
Is an apache of a wind.

## IN THE TWO LIGHTS

### THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

As I stood at the door  
Sheltered out of the wind,  
Something flew in  
Which I hardly could find.

In the dim gloomy doorway  
I searched till I found  
A dry withered leaf  
Lying down on the ground.

With thin pointed claws  
And a dry dusty skin,  
—Sure, a hall is no place  
For a leaf to be in!

Oh where is your tree,  
And your summer and all,  
Poor dusty leaf,  
Whistled into a hall!

COLLECTED POEMS

KATTY GOLLAGHER

The hill is bare! I only find  
A stone, a sky, a twisted tree

Fighting on a bitter wind!  
And that is all there is to see!

A tree, a hill, a wind, a sky,  
Where nothing ever passes by!



## IN THE TWO LIGHTS

### THIS WAY TO WINTER

Day by day  
The sun's broad beam  
Fades away  
By a golden gleam;  
Hark on the cliff  
How the sea-gulls scream!

Eve by eve  
The wind, more drear,  
Stays to grieve  
That the winter's near;  
—Hark how the crisp leaves  
Dart and flee!

Night by night  
The shade grows dense,  
And the cold starlight  
Beams more intense;  
—Hark how the beggar boy  
Asks for peace!

Get you out  
Your muffler grey,

COLLECTED POEMS

Your boots so stout,  
And your great-coat, pray,  
And put on your gloves,  
—'Tis a hardy day!

IN THE TWO LIGHTS

ETCHED IN FROST

The corn is down,  
The stooks are gone,  
The fields are brown,  
And the early dawn  
Grows slowly behind  
Where the mountains frown,  
And a thin white sun  
Is shivering down.

There isn't a leaf,  
Nor anything green,  
To aid belief  
That summer has been;  
And the puffed-up red-breast  
(Ball o' Grief)  
Hops at the window  
For relief.

The cows are in byre,  
The sheep in fold;  
The mare and the sire  
Are safe from cold;

COLLECTED POEMS

The hens are sheltered,  
In wood and wire,  
And the sheep-dog snoozes  
Before the fire.

The farmer can grin,  
And rub his hands,  
For his crops are in  
From the resting lands;  
And his wheat is stored  
In the oaken bin,  
And his buxom wife  
Makes merry within.

## IN THE TWO LIGHTS

### WHITE FIELDS

(1)

In the winter time we go  
Walking in the fields of snow;

Where there is no grass at all;  
Where the top of every wall,

Every fence, and every tree,  
Is as white as white can be.

(2)

Pointing out the way we came,  
—Every one of them the same—

All across the fields there be  
Prints in silver filigree;

And our mothers always know,  
By the footprints in the snow,

Where it is the children go.

COLLECTED POEMS

CHRISTMAS IN FREELANDS

(1)

The Red-Bud, the Kentucky Tree,  
Bloomed the spring to life for me  
In Freelands; and the Mocking Bird  
—Nimble chorister of glee,  
Sweet as poet ever heard  
In a world of ecstasy—  
Sang the summer, and the sun;  
Sang the summer in to me.

(2)

The spring is gone! The summer gone!  
The Cardinal has gone away!  
The fire-flies, dancing on the lawn,  
—Each a little moon at play—  
Are gone, with summer, gone away!  
And, where green acres were aglow,  
Daisy munches in the snow!

(3)

A snowy field! A stable piled  
With straw! A donkey's sleepy pow!

## IN THE TWO LIGHTS

A mother beaming on a child!  
A manger, and a munching cow!  
—These we all remember now—  
And airy voices, heard afar!  
And three Magicians, and a Star!

(4)

Two thousand times of snow declare  
That on the Christmas of the year  
There is a singing in the air;  
And all who listen for it hear  
A fairy chime, a seraph strain,  
Telling He is born again,  
—That all we love is born again.





BOOK IV  
HEELS AND HEAD



## WHAT TOMAS SAID IN A PUB

I saw God! Do you doubt it?  
Do you dare to doubt it?  
I saw the Almighty Man! His hand  
Was resting on a mountain! And  
He looked upon the World, and all about it:  
I saw Him plainer than you see me now  
—You mustn't doubt it!

He was not satisfied  
His look was all dissatisfied!  
His beard swung on a wind, far out of sight  
Behind the world's curve! And there was light  
Most fearful from His forehead! And he sighed  
—That star went always wrong, and from the start  
I was dissatisfied!—

He lifted up His hand!  
I say He heaved a dreadful hand  
Over the spinning earth! Then I said,—Stay,  
You must not strike it, God! I'm in the way!  
And I will never move from where I stand!—  
He said,—Dear child, I feared that you were dead,—  
. . . And stayed His hand!

COLLECTED POEMS

IN THE COOL OF THE EVENING

I thought I heard Him calling! Did you hear  
A sound! a little sound!

My curious ear

Is dinned with flying noises; and the tree  
Goes—whisper, whisper, whisper, silently,  
Till all its whispers spread into the sound  
Of a dull roar. . . .

—Lie closer to the ground:

The shade is deep, and He may pass us by,  
We are so very small, and His great eye,  
Customed to starry majesties, may gaze  
Too wide to spy us hiding in the maze:

—Ah, misery! The sun has not yet gone,  
And we are naked! He will look upon  
Our crouching shame! May make us stand upright,  
Burning in terror—O that it were night—!  
He may not come . . . What! Listen!  
Listen now—  
He's here! Lie closer . . .  
*Adam, where art thou?*

## HEELS AND HEAD

### WHAT THE DEVIL SAID

It was night time! God, the Father Good,  
Weary of praises, on a sudden stood  
From His great Throne, and leaned upon the sky:  
For He had heard a sound; a little cry,  
Thin as a whisper, climbing up the Steep.

And so He looked to where the Earth, asleep,  
Rocked with the moon: He saw the whirling sea  
Swing round the world in surgent energy,  
Tangling the moonlight in its netted foam;  
And, nearer, saw the white and fretted dome  
Of the ice-capped pole spin back again a ray  
To whistling stars, bright as a wizard's day.

But these He passed, with eyes intently wide,  
Till, closer still, the mountains He espied  
Squatting tremendous on the broad-backed Earth,  
Each nursing twenty rivers at a birth!  
And then, minutely, sought He for the cry  
That had climbed the slant of space so hugely high.

He found it in a ditch outside a town:  
A tattered hungry woman, crouching down

COLLECTED POEMS

By a dead babe—So there was nought to do,  
For what is done is done! And sad He drew  
Back to His Heaven of ivory and gold:  
And, as He sat, all suddenly there rolled,  
From where the woman wept upon the sod,  
Satan's deep voice—*O thou unhappy God!*

## HEELS AND HEAD

### THE MARKET

A man said to me at the fair  
—If you have got a poet's tongue  
Tumble up and chant the air  
That the Stars of Morning sung:

—I'll pay you, if you sing it nice,  
A penny-piece.—I answered flat,  
—Sixpence is the proper price  
For a ballad such as that.—

But he stared and wagged his head,  
Growling as he passed along  
—Sixpence! Why I'd see you dead  
Before I pay that for a song.—

I saw him buy three pints of stout  
With the sixpence—dirty lout!

COLLECTED POEMS

THE HORNED MOON

The heavens were silent, and bare,  
Not a star lit the heights over head,  
There was never a stir in the air,  
And the people were all gone to bed.

I was there, all alone, in the night  
With the Moon; and we talked for a while,  
And her face was a wonder of light!  
And her smile was a beautiful smile!

She leaned down, and I nearly went mad!  
—Though I was as frightened as she—  
But I got the kiss that she had  
Intended to give to the Sea.

Then the Sea roared out in surprise  
That the Moon was a jilt, was a jade;  
So the Moon ran away through the skies,  
And I ran away through the glade.

After that, we were never alone,  
We were watched day and night and they tied  
The poor little Moon to her throne,  
And I married a different bride.



## HEELS AND HEAD

### THE NUCLEUS

I looked from Mount Derision at  
Two ivory thrones that were in space,  
Whereon a man and woman sat  
—The very parallels of grace—  
Not lovelier has ever been  
By mortal seen!

Then One unto the Other said  
Tell me the secret, hidden well,  
Which you have never uttered;  
And I to you again will tell  
My guarded thought, and we shall know  
Each other, so—!

Then He—When those who kneel beside  
My holy altar do not bear  
A gift, I turn my face aside  
And give no hearing to the prayer;  
But whoso brings a gift shall see  
The proof of Me—

And She—When, on a festal day,  
Youth kneels by youth before my shrine,

COLLECTED POEMS

I think, if he or he might lay  
A ruddy cheek to mine,  
And comfort my sick soul, I'd lay  
My crown away—!

THE MONKEY'S COUSIN

I shall reach up, I shall grow  
Till the high gods say—Hello,  
Little brother, you must stop  
Ere our shoulders you o'ertop.—

I shall grow up, I shall reach  
Till the little gods beseech  
—Master, wait a little, do,  
We are running after you!—

I shall bulk and swell and scale  
Till the little gods shall quail,  
Running everywhere to hide  
From the terror of my stride!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### THE WHISPERER

The moon was round!  
And, as I walked along,  
There was no sound,  
Save where the wind with long,  
Low hushes, whispered to the ground  
A snatch of song.

No thought had I  
Save that the moon was fair,  
And fair the sky,  
And God was everywhere:  
I chanted, as the wind went by,  
A poet's prayer.

Then came a voice  
—Why is it that you praise  
And why rejoice,  
O stranger to the ways  
Of Providence? God has no choice  
In this sad maze!

—His law He laid  
Down at the dread beginnings,

## HEELS AND HEAD

When He made  
The world and set it spinning;  
And His casual hand betrayed  
Us into sinning.

—I fashion you;  
And then, for weal or woe,  
My business through  
I care not how ye go,  
Or struggle, win or lose, nor do  
I want to know.

—Is no appeal,  
For I am far from sight;  
And cannot feel  
The rigour of your plight;  
And if ye faint just when ye kneel,  
That, too, is right!

—Then do not sing,  
O poet in the night!  
That everything  
Is beautiful and right:  
What if a wind come now and fling  
At thee its spite!

All in amaze  
I listened to the tone

COLLECTED POEMS

Mocking my praise :  
And then I heard the moan  
That all tormented nature did upraise :  
From tree and stone !

And, as I went,  
I heard it once again,  
That harsh lament !  
And fire came to my brain !  
Deep anger unto me was lent  
To write this strain !

## HEELS AND HEAD

### BESSIE BOBTAIL

As down the road she wambled slow,  
She had not got a place to go:  
She had not got a place to fall  
And rest herself—no place at all!  
She stumped along, and wagged her pate;  
And said a thing was desperate.

Her face was screwed and wrinkled tight  
Just like a nut—and, left and right,  
On either side, she wagged her head  
And said a thing; and what she said  
Was desperate as any word  
That ever yet a person heard.

I walked behind her for a while,  
And watched the people nudge and smile:  
But ever, as she went, she said,  
As left and right she swung her head,  
—*O God He knows: And, God He knows!*  
*And, surely God Almighty knows!*

## COLLECTED POEMS

### INDEPENDENCE

I grew single and sure,  
And I will not endure  
That my mind should be seen  
By the sage or the boor.

I will keep, if I can,  
From each brotherly man:  
The help of their hands  
Is no part of my plan.

I will rise, I will go  
To the land of my foe;  
For his scowl is the sun  
That shall cause me to grow.



## HEELS AND HEAD

### MAC DHOUL

I saw them all!  
I could have laughed aloud  
To see them at their capers;  
That serious, solemn-footed, weighty crowd  
Of angels—or, say, resurrected drapers!  
Each with a thin flame swinging round his head!  
With lilting wings and eyes of holy dread!  
And curving ears strained for the great foot-fall!  
And not a thought of sin—!  
I don't know how I kept the laughter in.

For I was there!  
Unknown, unguessed at! Snug  
In a rose tree's branchy spurt!  
With two week's whisker blackening lug to lug!  
With tattered breeks and only half a shirt!  
Swollen fit to burst with laughter at the sight  
Of those dull angels, drooping left and right  
Along the towering throne! Each in a scare  
To hear His foot advance,  
Huge from the cloud behind! All in a trance!

And suddenly,  
As silent as a ghost,

COLLECTED POEMS

I jumped out from the bush!  
Went scooting through the glaring, nerveless host  
All petrified, all gaping in a hush!  
Came to the throne, and, nimble as a rat,  
Hopped up it, squatted close, and there I sat,  
Squirming with laughter till I had to cry,  
To see Him standing there,  
Frozen with all His angels in a stare!

He raised His hand!  
His hand! 'Twas like a sky!  
Gripped me in half a finger,  
Flipped me round, and sent me spinning high  
Through screaming planets! Faith, I didn't linger  
To scratch myself . . . And then adown I sped,  
Scraping old moons and twisting, heels and head,  
A chuckle in the void! Till . . . here I stand  
As naked as a brick!  
I'll sing the Peeler and the Goat in half a tick!

## HEELS AND HEAD

### WASHED IN SILVER

Gleaming in silver are the hills!  
Blazing in silver is the sea!

And a silvery radiance spills  
Where the moon drives royally!

Clad in silver tissue, I  
March magnificently by!

COLLECTED POEMS

PSYCHOMETRIST

I listened to a man, and he  
Had no word to say to me:  
Then unto a stone I bowed,  
And it spoke to me aloud.

—The force that bindeth me so long,  
Once sang in the linnet's song;  
Now upon the ground I lie,  
While the centuries go by!

—Linnets shall for joy atone  
And be fastened into stone;  
While, upon the waving tree,  
Stones shall sing in ecstasy!

## HEELS AND HEAD

### THE FUR COAT

I walked out in my Coat of Pride;  
I looked about on every side;

And said the mountains should not be  
Just where they were, and that the sea

Was out of place, and that the beech  
Should be an oak! And then, from each,

I turned in dignity, as if  
They were not there! I sniffed a sniff;

And climbed upon my sunny shelf;  
And sneezed a while; and scratched myself.

COLLECTED POEMS

THE MERRY POLICEMAN

I was appointed guardian by  
The Power that frowns along the sky,  
To watch the Tree, and see that none  
Plucked of the fruit that grew thereon.

There was a robber in the Tree,  
Who climbed as high as ever he  
Was able! At the top he knew  
The Apple of all Apples grew.

The night was dark! The branch was thin!  
In every wind he heard the din  
Of angels calling—Guardian, see  
That no one climbs upon the Tree—

But when he saw me standing there  
He shook with terror and despair,  
Then I said to him—Be at rest,  
The best to him who wants the best—

So I was sacked! But I have got  
A job in hell to keep me hot!

## HEELS AND HEAD

### THE DEVIL

(1)

I think the stars do nod at me!  
But not when people are about;  
For they regard me curiously  
Whenever I go out.

I may have been a star one day,  
A rebel of the host that fell,  
And they are nodding down to say,  
—Come back to us from hell—

Perhaps they shout to one another  
—There He is! Oh, that is He!—  
And tell it to some other mother  
Than the one that walloped me.

(2)

Brothers! What is it ye mean!  
What is it ye strive to say?  
That so urgently ye lean  
From the spirit to the clay!

If ye mean revolt! If ye  
Raise the standard! Do not seek

COLLECTED POEMS

Help or heartening from me!  
I am powerless, am weak,

Am clipped of wing! The crown of old  
Would not fit me now! My rage  
Is as dreadful as the scold  
Of a linnet in a cage!

(3)

O, my dears! I'm nodding, too!  
Hard as ever I can try!  
Up, and up, and up, to you,  
Where you nod upon the sky!



## HEELS AND HEAD

### THE FAIRY BOY

A little Fairy in a tree  
Wrinkled his wee face at me;  
And he sang a song of joy  
All about a little boy,  
Who upon a winter night,  
On a midnight long ago,  
Had been rapt away from sight  
Of the world and all its woe;  
Rapt away,  
Snapt away,  
To a place where children play  
In the sunlight all the day.

Where the winter is forbidden,  
Where no child may older grow,  
Where a flower is never hidden  
Underneath a pall of snow;  
Dancing gaily,  
Free from sorrow,  
Under dancing summer skies,  
Where no grim mysterious morrow  
Ever comes to terrorize.

COLLECTED POEMS

This I told a priest and he  
Spoke a word of mystery;  
And with candle, book and bell,  
Tolling Latin like a knell,  
Ruthlessly,  
From the tree,  
Sprinkling holy water round,  
He drove the Fairy down to hell,  
There in torment to be bound.

So the tree is withered and  
There is sorrow on the land:  
But the devils milder grow  
Dancing gay  
Every day  
In that kinder land below:  
There the devils dance for joy  
And love that little wrinkled boy.

CROOKED-HEART

I loosed an arrow from my bow  
At the world that swung below;  
Thinking—This will surely dart,  
Guided by my guiding fate,  
Into the malignant heart  
Of the person whom I hate!

So, by hatred feathered well,  
Swift the flashing arrow fell!  
And I watched it from above  
Disappear;  
Cleaving sheer  
Through the only heart I love!

Such the guard my angels keep!  
But my foe is guarded well!  
I have slain my love, and weep  
Tears of blood! While he, asleep,  
Does not know an arrow fell!

COLLECTED POEMS

THE SECRET

I was frightened, for a wind  
Crept along the grass, to say  
Something that was in my mind  
Yesterday—

Something that I did not know  
Could be found out by the wind;  
I had buried it so low  
In my mind!

## HEELS AND HEAD

### TIME'S REVENGE

Once on a time he would have said  
—Not all the ghouls of sorcery  
Can make me hang a craven head  
Nor shake a whimper out of me.

For I could top that sullen night,  
Or outwear any woe that came,  
And look on good or evil plight  
As but the chances of a game.

But now a night-hag hath me down!  
And I am staring, suddenly,  
As one who wakens from renown  
To staring notoriety—

The king his diadem shall wear!  
The half-king wear what gaud he can  
Until Time swings him by the hair,  
No king at all, and scarce a man!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### WHERE THE DEMONS GRIN

The hill was low, it stretched away  
A straggling mile of grass to where  
The sea was stamping; tossing spray  
Beyond its bulwarks black and bare;  
A sullen sea of gray!

Ah me! It was so desolate!  
And sadder for the sea-bird's cry  
Thrillingly thin! There seemed a weight  
Brooding, as if the leaden sky  
Hung heavier for hate!

The grasses jerked, as they were stung  
By vicious winds! A daisy's head  
Crouched in a tuft, till it was flung  
From its uneasy, troubled bed,  
And tossed the waves among.

A bent old man was climbing slow,  
With weary step and plodding pace,  
That savage hill; and wild did blow  
A bitter wind in headlong race,  
Harsh from the sea below.

## HEELS AND HEAD

And all the woeful things he said!  
Ah me, the twitching of his lips!  
Of hungry children craving bread!  
And fortune's sideward slips!  
And how his wife was dead!

He held a rope; and as he trod,  
Pressing against the furious wind,  
He muttered low and sneered at God,  
And said He sure was deaf or blind,  
Or lazing on the sod!

. . . . .  
And what was done I will not tell.  
There is a bent tree on the top  
Of that low hill, there you can see  
The sequel to this mystery . . .  
Beneath the moon . . . I dared not stop. . . .  
My God!—a demon up from hell  
Jab-jabbered as the old man fell.

## COLLECTED POEMS

### THE TWINS

Good and bad are in my heart,  
But I cannot tell to you  
—For they never are apart—  
Which is better of the two.

I am this! I am the other!  
And the devil is my brother!  
But my father He is God!  
And my mother is the Sod!  
I am safe enough, you see,  
Owing to my pedigree.

So I shelter love and hate  
Like twin brothers in a nest;  
Lest I find, when it's too late,  
That the other was the best.



## HEELS AND HEAD

### THE ANCIENT ELF

I am the maker,  
The builder, the breaker,  
The eagle-winged helper,  
The speedy forsaker!

The lance and the lyre,  
The water, the fire,  
The tooth of oppression,  
The lip of desire!

The snare and the wing,  
The honey, the sting!  
When you seek for me—look  
For a different thing!

I, careless and gay,  
Never mean what I say,  
For my thoughts and my eyes  
Look the opposite way!

COLLECTED POEMS

EVERYTHING THAT I CAN SPY

Everything that I can spy  
Through the circle of my eye;

Everything that I can see  
Has been woven out of me!

I packed the sun with fire, I threw  
Gold of morn, of noon and eve

In the deeps and steeps of blue!  
And all else that I perceive,

Sun and sea and mountain high,  
Are made, are moulded by my eye!

Closing it, I yet shall find,  
All that is is in the mind.

## HEELS AND HEAD

### IN THE POPPY FIELD

Mad Patsy said, he said to me,  
That every morning he could see  
An angel walking on the sky;  
Across the sunny skies of morn  
He threw great handfuls far and nigh  
Of poppy seed among the corn;  
—And then, he said, the angels run  
To see the poppies in the sun—

A poppy is a devil weed,  
I said to him—he disagreed:  
He said the devil had no hand  
In spreading flowers tall and fair  
By corn and rye and meadow land,  
And gurth and barrow everywhere:  
The devil has not any flower,  
But only money in his power.

And then he stretched out in the sun,  
And rolled upon his back for fun!  
He kicked his legs and roared for joy  
Because the sun was shining down!

COLLECTED POEMS

He said he was a little boy  
And wouldn't work for any clown!  
He ran and laughed behind a bee;  
And danced for very ecstasy!

## HEELS AND HEAD

### OULD SNARLY-GOB

There was a little fire in the grate;  
A fistful of red coal,  
Might warm a soul,  
But scarce could heat a body that had weight—  
Not mine, at any rate.

A glum old man was sitting by the fire,  
With wrinkled brow,  
Warming himself, somehow;  
And mumbling low, this melancholy sire,  
A singular desire.

If I were young again, said he, if I  
Were only young again,  
I'd laugh at pain!  
I'd jeer at people groaning, and I'd try  
To pinch them ere they'd die!

The young folk laugh and jump about and play  
And I am old,  
And grey, and cold!  
If I were only young again, and they  
Were old, and cold, and grey,

COLLECTED POEMS

I'd pull them from the fire, I'd jeer and shout,  
I'd say, for fun,  
Get up and run  
And warm yourself, you lazy, doddering lout!  
Get up and run about!

## HEELS AND HEAD

### DANNY MURPHY

He was as old as old could be,  
His little eye could scarcely see,  
His mouth was sunken in between  
His nose and chin, and he was lean  
And twisted up and withered quite,  
So that he couldn't walk aright.

His pipe was always going out,  
And then he'd have to search about  
In all his pockets, and he'd mow  
—O, deary me! and, musha now!—  
And then he'd light his pipe, and then  
He'd let it go clean out again.

He couldn't dance or jump or run,  
Or ever have a bit of fun  
Like me and Susan, when we shout  
And jump and throw ourselves about:  
—But when he laughed then you could see  
He was as young as young could be!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### I WISH

I wish I had not come to man's estate,  
I wish I was a silly urchin still,  
With bounding pulses, and a heart elate  
To meet whatever came of good or ill.

Of good or ill! Not knowing what was good,  
But groping to a better than I knew;  
And guessing deeper than I understood;  
And hoping truths that seemed to be untrue.

Of good or ill! When, so it often seems,  
There is no good at all but only ill.  
Alas, the sunny summer-time of dreams!  
8he dragons I had nerved my hand to kill!

The maid I could have rescued, and the queen  
Whose champion long ago I might have been!



## HEELS AND HEAD

### SEUMAS BEG

A man was sitting underneath a tree  
Outside the village; and he asked me what  
Name was upon this place; and said that he  
Was never here before—He told a lot

Of stories to me too. His nose was flat!  
I asked him how it happened, and he said  
—The first mate of the Holy Ghost did that  
With a marling-spike one day; but he was dead;

And jolly good job too; and he'd have gone  
A long way to have killed him—Oh, he had  
A gold ring in one ear; the other one  
—“Was bit off by a crocodile, bedad!”—

That's what he said. He taught me how to chew!  
He was a real nice man! He liked me too!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### THE DEVIL'S BAG

I saw the Devil walking down the lane  
Behind our house.—A heavy bag  
Was strapped upon his shoulders and the rain  
Sizzled when it hit him.  
He picked a rag  
Up from the ground and put it in his sack,  
And grinned, and rubbed his hands.  
There was a thing  
Alive inside the bag upon his back  
—It must have been a soul! I saw it fling  
And twist about inside, and not a hole  
Or cranny for escape! Oh, it was sad!  
I cried, and shouted out,—*Let out that soul!*  
But he turned round, and, sure, his face went mad,  
And twisted up and down, and he said "*Hell!*"  
And ran away . . . Oh, mammy! I'm not well!

## HEELS AND HEAD

### BREAKFAST TIME

The sun is always in the sky  
Whenever I get out of bed,  
And I often wonder why  
It's never late.—My sister said

She didn't know who did the trick,  
And that she didn't care a bit,  
And I should eat my porridge quick.  
. . . I think its mother wakens it.

## COLLECTED POEMS

### CHECK

The Night was creeping on the ground!  
She crept and did not make a sound,

Until she reached the tree: And then  
She covered it, and stole again

Along the grass beside the wall!  
—I heard the rustling of her shawl

As she threw blackness everywhere  
Along the sky, the ground, the air,

And in the room where I was hid!  
But, no matter what she did

To everything that was without,  
She could not put my candle out!

So I stared at the Night! And she  
Stared back solemnly at me!

## HEELS AND HEAD

### MIDNIGHT

And suddenly I wakened in a fright;  
I thought I heard a movement in the room  
But did not dare to look; I snuggled right  
Down underneath the bedclothes—Then a boom,  
And a tremendous voice said, "*Sit up, lad,*  
*And let me see your face.*" So up I sat,  
Although I didn't want to—I was glad  
I did though, for it was an angel that  
Had called me, and he said, he'd come to know  
Was I the boy who wouldn't say his prayers  
Nor do his sums—and that I'd have to go  
Straight down to hell because of such affairs:  
. . . I said I'd be converted, and do good  
If he would let me off—He said he would.

## COLLECTED POEMS

### THE APPLE TREE

I was hiding in the crooked apple tree,  
Scouting for Indians, when a man came!  
I thought it was an Indian, for he  
Was running like the wind—There was a flame  
Of sunlight on his hand as he drew near,  
And then I saw a knife gripped in his fist!

He panted like a horse! His eyes were queer!  
Wide-open! Staring frightfully! And, hist!  
His mouth stared open like another eye!  
And all his hair was matted down with sweat!

I crouched among the leaves lest he should spy  
Where I was hiding—So he did not get  
His awful eyes on me; but, like the wind,  
He fled, as if he heard some thing behind!

## HEELS AND HEAD

### THE WHITE WINDOW

The Moon comes every night to peep  
Through the window where I lie:  
But I pretend to be asleep;  
And watch the Moon go slowly by,  
—And she never makes a sound!

She stands and stares! And then she goes  
To the house that's next to me,  
Stealing by on tippy-toes;  
To peep at folk asleep maybe  
—And she never makes a sound!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### IN THE ORCHARD

There was a giant by the Orchard Wall  
Peeping about on this side and on that,  
And feeling in the trees. He was as tall  
As the big apple tree, and twice as fat:  
His beard poked out, all bristly-black and there  
Were leaves and gorse and heather in his hair.

He held a blackthorn club in his right hand,  
And plunged the other into every tree,  
Searching for something—You could stand  
Beside him and not reach up to his knee  
So big he was—I trembled lest he should  
Come trampling, round-eyed, down to where I stood.

I tried to get away.—But, as I slid  
Under a bush, he saw me, and he bent  
Down deep at me, and said, "*Where is she hid?*"  
I pointed over there, and off he went—

But, while he searched, I turned and simply flew  
Round by the lilac bushes back to you!



## HEELS AND HEAD

### APRIL SHOWERS

The leaves are fresh after the rain,  
The air is sweet and clear,  
The sun is shining warm again,  
The sparrows hopping in the lane  
Are brisk and full of cheer.

And that is why we dance and play,  
And that is why we sing,  
Calling out in voices gay,  
We will not go to school to-day  
Nor learn anything!

It is a happy thing, I say,  
To be alive on such a day.

THE TURN OF THE ROAD

I was playing with my hoop along the road  
Just where the bushes are, when, suddenly,  
I heard a shout.—I ran away and stowed  
Myself beneath a bush, and watched to see  
What made the noise, and then, around the bend,  
A woman came.

She was old!  
She was wrinkle-faced! She had big teeth!—The end  
Of her red shawl caught on a bush and rolled  
Right off her, and her hair fell down.—Her face  
Was white, and awful, and her eyes looked sick,  
And she was talking queer.

*“O God of Grace!”*

Said she, *“where is the child?”* and flew back quick  
The way she came, and screamed, and shook her  
hands!

. . . Maybe she was a witch from foreign lands!

## HEELS AND HEAD

### BEHIND THE HILL

Behind the hill I met a man in green.  
He asked me if my mother had gone out?  
So I said yes. He said I should have seen  
The castle where his soldiers sing and shout  
From dawn to dark, and told me that he had  
A crock of gold inside a hollow tree,  
And I could have it.—I wanted money bad  
To buy a sword with, and I thought that he  
Would keep his solemn word; so, off we went.

He said he had a pound hid in the crock,  
And owned the castle too, and paid no rent  
To any one, and that you had to knock  
Five hundred times. I said,—*Who reckoned up?*—  
And he said,—*You insulting little pup!*—

## COLLECTED POEMS

### THE CHERRY TREE

Come from your bed, my drowsy gentleman!  
And you, fair lady, rise and braid your hair!  
And bid the children wash, if that they can;  
If not, assist you them, and make them fair  
As is the morning, and the morning sky,  
And all the sun doth cleanse in golden air.

For he has climbed the heights these times ago!  
He laughed about the hills and they were glad;  
With bubbled pearl he set the stream aglow  
And laced the hedge in silver; and he clad  
The lawn in pomp of green, and white, and gold;  
And bade the world forget it had been sad.

Then lift yourself, good sir! And you, sweet dame,  
Unlash your evening eyes of pious grey!  
Call on the children by each lovéd name,  
And set them on the grass and bid them play;  
And play with them a while, and sing with them,  
Beneath the cherry bush, a rondelay.

BOOK V  
LESS THAN DAINTILY



## THE APOLOGY

Do not be distant with me, do not be  
Angry to hear I drank deep of your wine,  
But treat a laughing matter laughingly;  
For 'tis the poet's failing, to incline,  
By nature and by art, to jollity.

Always I loved to see—sight all too rare!  
A rich, red, tide lip at a flagon's brim;  
To sit, half fool and half philosopher;  
To chat with every kind of her and him;  
And to shrug at lore of money-gatherer.

Often I trudge the mud by hedge and wall;  
And often there's no money in my purse!  
Nor malice in my heart ever at all!  
And of my songs no person is the worse,  
But I myself, who give my all to all.

Though busybody told, say—what of it!  
Say, kindest man of kindest men that live,  
—The poet only takes his sup and bit!  
And say—It is no great return to give  
For his unstinted gift of verse and wit!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### THE WEAVERS

Many a time your father gave me aid  
When I was down—and now I'm down again!  
You mustn't take it bad, nor be dismayed  
To know that youngsters ought to help old men,  
And 'tis their duty to do that: Amen!

I have no cows, no sheep, no boots, no hat!  
The folk who gave me presents are all dead,  
And all good luck died with them! Because of that  
I won't pay what I owe you; but, instead,  
I'll owe you till the dead rise from the dead.

You weave good shirts; and I weave, for my bread,  
Good poetry—But you get paid at times!  
The only rap I get is on my head:  
But when it comes again that men like rhymes  
—And pay for them—I'll pay you for your shirt!



## LESS THAN DAINTILY

### A GLASS OF BEER

The lanky hank of a she in the inn over there  
Nearly killed me for asking the loan of a glass of beer;  
May the devil grip the whey-faced slut by the hair,  
And beat bad manners out of her skin for a year.

That parboiled ape, with the toughest jaw you will see  
On virtue's path, and a voice that would rasp the dead,  
Came roaring and raging the minute she looked at me,  
And threw me out of the house on the back of my  
head!

If I asked her master he'd give me a cask a day;  
But she, with the beer at hand, not a gill would  
arrange!

May she marry a ghost and bear him a kitten, and may  
The High King of Glory permit her to get the mange.

## COLLECTED POEMS

### BLUE BLOOD

We thought at first, this man is a king for sure,  
Or the branch of a mighty and ancient and famous  
    lineage  
—That silly, sulky, illiterate, black-avised boor  
Who was hatched by foreign vulgarity under a hedge!

The good men of Clare were drinking his health in a  
    flood,  
And gazing, with me, in awe at the princely lad;  
And asking each other from what bluest blueness of  
    blood  
His daddy was squeezed, and the pa of the da of his  
    dad?

We waited there, gaping and wondering, anxiously,  
Until he'd stop eating, and let the glad tidings out;  
And the slack-jawed booby proved to the hilt that he  
Was lout, son of lout, by old lout, and was da to  
    a lout!

ODELL

My mind is sad and weary thinking how  
Our noblemen are all gone oversea;  
Are far from Ireland, and are fighting now  
In France, and Flanders, and in Germany.

If they, whom I could talk to without dread,  
Were home I should not mind what foe might do;  
Nor see the tax-collector seize my bed  
To pay the hearth-rate that is overdue.

I pray to Him—who, in the haughty hour  
Of Babel, threw confusion on each tongue—  
That I may see our princes back in power,  
And see Odell, the tax-collector, hung!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### GERALDINE'S CLOAK

I will not heed the message that you bring!  
That loveliest lady gave her cloak to me;  
And who'd believe she'd give away a thing  
And ask it back again!—'Tis lunacy!

She knew that leaving her must make me grieve;  
And for my going she had tender eyes!  
. . . If some sweet angel sang it me, believe  
I'd not believe that angel knew the skies!

The lovely Geraldine knows that the sting  
Of want and woe is thrust deep into me:  
I don't believe she'd do this kind of thing;  
Nor treat a poet less than daintily!

SKIM-MILK

A small part only of my grief I write;  
And if I do not publish all the tale  
It is because my gloom gets some respite  
By just a small bewailing: I bewail  
That a poet must with stupid folk abide  
Who steal his food and ruin his inside.

Once I had books, each book beyond compare,  
And now no book at all is left to me;  
Now I am spied and peeped on everywhere;  
And this old head, stuffed with latinity,  
Rich with the poet's store of grave and gay,  
Will not get me skim-milk for half a day.

A horse, a mule, an ass—no beast have I!  
Into the forest day by day I go,  
And trot beneath a load of wood, that high!  
Which raises on my poor old back a row  
Of red raw blisters till I cry—Alack,  
The rider that rides me will break my back.

When he was old, and worn, and near his end,  
The Poet met Saint Patrick, and was stayed!

## COLLECTED POEMS

I am a poet too, and seek a friend;  
A prop, a staff, a comforter, an aid;  
A Patrick to lift Ossian from despair,  
In Cormac Uasail mac Donagh of the Golden Hair!

LESS THAN DAINTILY

EGAN O RAHILLY

Here in a distant place I hold my tongue;  
I am O Rahilly!

When I was young,  
Who now am young no more,  
I did not eat things picked up from the shore:  
The periwinkle, and the tough dog-fish  
At even-tide have got into my dish!

The great, where are they now! the great had said  
—This is not seemly! Bring to him instead  
That which serves his and serves our dignity—  
And that was done.

I am O Rahilly!  
Here in a distant place he holds his tongue,  
Who once said all his say, when he was young!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### O BRUADAIR

I will sing no more songs! The pride of my country  
I sang  
Through forty long years of good rhyme, without  
any avail;  
And no one cared even the half of the half of a hang  
For the song or the singer—so, here is an end to  
the tale!

If you say, if you think, I complain, and have not got  
a cause  
Let you come to me here, let you look at the state  
of my hand!  
Let you say if a goose-quill has calloused these horny  
old paws,  
Or the spade that I grip on, and dig with, out there  
in the land?

When our nobles were safe and renowned and were  
rooted and tough,  
Though my thought went to them and had joy in  
the fortune of those,  
And pride that was proud of their pride—they gave  
little enough!  
Not as much as two boots for my feet, or an old  
suit of clothes!



## LESS THAN DAINTILY

I ask of the Craftsman that fashioned the fly and the  
bird;  
Of the Champion whose passion will lift me from  
death in a time;  
Of the Spirit that melts icy hearts with the wind of a  
word,  
That my people be worthy, and get, better singing  
than mine.

I had hoped to live decent, when Ireland was quit of  
her care,  
As a poet or steward, perhaps, in a house of degree,  
But my end of the tale is—old brogues and old  
breeches to wear!  
So I'll sing no more songs for the men that care  
nothing for me.

COLLECTED POEMS

IN THE IMPERATIVE MOOD

Let the man who has and doesn't give  
Break his neck, and cease to live!

Let him who gives without a care  
Gather rubies from the air!

LESS THAN DAINTILY

WILLIAM O KELLY

Not since the Gael was sold  
At Aughrim! Not since to cold,  
Dull death went Owen Roe!  
Not since the drowning of Clann Adam in the days  
of Noe  
Brought men to hush!  
Has such a tale of woe  
Come to us  
In such a rush!

The True Flower of the Blood of the Place  
Has fallen!  
The True Clean-Wheat of the Gael  
Is reaped!

Destruction be upon Death!  
For he has come,  
And taken from our tree  
The topmost Blackberry!

COLLECTED POEMS

ANTHONY O DALY

Since your limbs were laid out  
The stars do not shine!  
The fish do not leap  
In the waves!  
On our meadows the dew  
Is not sweet in the morn,  
For O Daly is dead!  
Not a word can be said!  
Not a flower can be born!  
Not a tree have a leaf!  
Anthony!  
After you  
There is nothing to do!  
There is nothing but grief!

LESS THAN DAINTILY

EILEEN, DIARMUID AND TEIG

Be kind unto these three, O King!  
For they were fragrant-skinned, cheerful, and giving!

Three stainless pearls! Three of mild winning ways!  
Three candles sending forth three pleasant rays!

Three vines! Three doves! Three apples on a bough!  
Three graces in a house! Three who refused nohow

Help to the needy! Three of slenderness!  
Three memories for the companionless!

Three strings of music! Three deep holes in clay!  
Three lovely children who loved Christ away!

Three mouths! Three hearts! Three minds beneath  
a stone!  
Ruin it is! Three causes for the moan

That rises for three children dead and gone!  
Be kind, O King, unto this two and one!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### INIS FÁL

Now may we turn aside and dry our tears!  
And comfort us! And lay aside our fears,  
For all is gone!

All comely quality!  
All gentleness and hospitality!  
All courtesy and merriment

Is gone!  
Our virtues, all, are withered every one!  
Our music vanished, and our skill to sing!

Now may we quiet us and quit our moan!  
Nothing is whole that could be broke! No thing  
Remains to us of all that was our own.

LESS THAN DAINTILY

THE WAVE OF CLIONA

My heart is withered and my health is gone!  
For they, who were not easy put upon,  
Masters of mirth, and of fair clemency,  
Masters of wealth, and gentle charity,  
They are all gone!

Mac Carthy Mor is dead!  
Mac Carthy of the Lee is finishéd  
Mac Carthy of Kanturk joined clay to clay,  
And gat him gone, and bides as deep as they!

Their years, their gentle deeds, their flags are furled!  
And deeply down, under the stiffened world,  
In oaken chests are kings and princes thrust,  
To crumble, day by day, into the dust  
A mouth might puff at! Nor is left a trace  
Of those who did of grace all that was grace!

O Wave of Cliona, cease thy bellowing!  
And let mine ears forget a while to ring  
At thy long, lamentable, misery!  
The great are dead indeed! The great are dead!  
And I, in little time, will stoop my head

COLLECTED POEMS

And put it under, and will be forgot  
With them, and be with them, and, thus, be not!

Ease thee! Cease thy long keening! Cry no more!  
End is! And here is end! And end is sore!  
And to all lamentation be there end!

If I might come on thee, O howling friend!  
Knowing that sails were drumming on the sea  
Westward to Eire, and that help would be  
Trampling for her upon a Spanish deck,  
I'd ram thy lamentation down thy neck.



LESS THAN DAINTILY

THE LAND OF FÁL

If poesy have truth at all,  
And if a Lion of the Gael  
Shall rule the Lovely Land of Fál!  
O yellow mast! O roaring sail!  
Carry a message o'er the sea!  
Carry the leadership from me  
To great O Néill!

COLLECTED POEMS

WHEN YOU WALK

When you walk in a field,  
Look down  
Lest you tramp  
On a daisy's crown!

But in a city  
Look always high,  
And watch  
The beautiful clouds go by!

## LESS THAN DAINTILY

### THE STREET BEHIND YOURS

The night droops down upon the street,  
Shade after shade! A solemn frown  
Is pressing to  
A deeper hue  
The houses drab and brown;  
Till all in blackness touch and meet,  
Are mixed and melted down.

All is so silent! Not a sound  
Comes through the dark! The gas lamps throw  
From here and there  
A feeble glare  
On the pavement cracked below;  
On the greasy, muddy ground;  
On the houses in a row.

Those rigid houses, black and sour!  
Each dark thin building stretching high;  
Rank upon rank  
Of windows blank  
Stare from a sullen eye;  
With doleful aspect scowl and glower  
At the timid passer-by.

## COLLECTED POEMS

And down between those spectre files  
The narrow roadway, thick with mud,  
Doth crouch and hide!  
While close beside  
The gutter churns a flood  
Of noisome water through the piles  
Of garbage, thick as blood!

And tho' 'tis silent! Tho' no sound  
Crawls from the blackness thickly spread!  
Yet darkness brings  
Grim, noiseless things  
That walk as they were dead!  
They glide, and peer, and steal around,  
With stealthy, silent tread!

You dare not walk! That awful crew  
Might speak or laugh as you pass by!  
Might touch and paw  
With a formless claw,  
Or leer from a sodden eye!  
Might whisper awful things they knew!  
—Or wring their hands and cry!

There is the doorway mean and low!  
And there are the houses drab and brown!

LESS THAN DAINTILY

And the night's black pall!

And the hours that crawl!

And the forms that peer and frown!

And the lamps' dim glare on the slush below!

And the gutter grumbling down!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### TO THE FOUR COURTS, PLEASE

The driver rubbed at his nettly chin  
With a huge loose forefinger, crooked and black;  
And his wobbly violet lips sucked in,  
And puffed out again and hung down slack:  
A black fang shone through his lop-sided smile,  
In his little pouched eye flickered years of guile.

And the horse, poor beast! It was ribbed and forked;  
And its ears hung down, and its eyes were old;  
And its knees were knuckly; and, as we talked,  
It swung the stiff neck that could scarcely hold  
Its big skinny head up—then I stepped in,  
And the driver climbed to his seat with a grin.

God help the horse, and the driver too!  
And the people and beasts who have never a friend!  
For the driver easily might have been you,  
And the horse be me by a different end!  
And nobody knows how their days will cease;  
And the poor, when they're old, have little of peace!

## LESS THAN DAINTILY

### A STREET

Two narrow files of houses scowl,  
Blackened with grime, on either side  
Of the road, and through them prowl

Strange men and women, shifty-eyed  
And slinking. The drink-shop throws  
A flaring yellow, light adown

The pavement. The gutter flows  
A turbid evil stream. A clown,  
Drink-sodden, lurches by and sings

Obscenely. A woman trails behind,  
With old bad eyes. Her clothing clings  
Rain-soaked about her. No daring wind,

Light-hearted, from a garden blows  
The sweetness here of any rose.

## COLLECTED POEMS

### FIFTY POUNDS A YEAR AND A PENSION

I have never seen the sun walk in the dawn  
On a lawn  
While the lark sang, mad with rapture, as he came,  
Robed in flame,  
Racing, where the purple mountains' foreheads loom  
Through the gloom.

Or noticed him at evening give the sea  
His last fee;  
Nor the burnished, ruddy, golden, peaceful sheen  
Tread the green;  
While the wood, with long and longer shadow, bends  
As he wends.

And my lips shall never blow an oaten pipe,  
Nor the ripe,  
Glowing berries crush between them from the brake,  
Where they make  
Such a picture that the gods might know delight  
At the sight!

For I've sat my life away with pen and rule  
On a stool;



## LESS THAN DAINTILY

Totting little lines of figures; and so will,  
Tho' the chill  
And the languor of grey hairs upon my brow  
Mocks me now.

And sometimes while I work I lift my eyes  
To the skies;  
To the foot or two of heaven which I trace  
In the space  
That a grimy window grudges to the spot  
Where I tot.

And I ask the God who made me and the sun,  
What I've done  
To be buried in this dark and dreary cave,  
As in a grave,  
While the world laughs in scorn now and then  
At my pen!

But I'll sit and work my utmost and not budge;  
Tho' a grudge  
Is ever growing in the bosom of a clod  
'Gainst the God  
Who condemned him in his lifetime to grow fit  
For the pit.

## COLLECTED POEMS

### WHAT THE TRAMP SAID

Why should we live when living is a pain?  
I have not seen a flower had any scent,  
Nor heard a bird sing once! The very rain  
Seems dirty! and the clouds, all soiled and rent,  
Toil sulkily across the black old sky;  
And all the weary stars go moping by;  
They care not whither—sea, or mount, or plain,  
All's one—and what one gets is never gain!

The sun scowled yesterday a weary while,  
That used to beam. The moon last night was grim,  
With cynic gaze, and frosty sullen smile:  
And once I loved to gaze, while, from the rim  
Of some great mountain, she would look, and gild  
The rustling cornfield. Now she is filled  
With bitterness and rancour sour as bile,  
And blasts the world's surface every mile.

There is no more sunlight! All the weary world  
Is steeped in shadow! And for evermore  
The clouds will swarm and press, till I am hurled  
Back to the heart of things! Oh it is sore  
And sad and sorry to be living! Let me die  
And rest—while all eternity lolls by—  
Where the fierce winds of God are closely furled  
Ten million miles away from this damned world!

## LESS THAN DAINTILY

### OPTIMIST

(1)

All ye that labour! Every broken man  
Bending beneath his load! Each tired heart  
That cannot quit its burden! All the clan  
Black-browed and fierce, who feel the smart

Of fortune's lances, wayward, uncontrolled!  
All ye who writhe in silence 'neath the sin  
That no man knows about! And ye that sold  
The freedom of your souls if ye might win

A little ease from strife, and hate the thing  
That bought it! Ye that droop, trembling with pain,  
And hunger-haunted, lacking everything  
That dignifies existence, and are fain

To lay ye down and die! Hear the behest  
—All ye that labour, come to Me, and rest—

(2)

Let ye be still, ye tortured ones! Nor strive  
Where striving's futile! Ye can ne'er attain

[ 211 ]

## COLLECTED POEMS

To lay your burdens down! All things alive  
Must bear the woes of life, and if the pain

Be more than ye can bear, then ye can die!  
That is the law! And bootless 'tis to seek  
In the deeps of space; beyond the high  
Pearl-tinted clouds; out where the moon doth peak

Her silver horns; for all that vastness bows  
To Tyrant Toil, and weeps to find  
Somewhere an aid. Be ye patient! Rouse  
Your shoulders to the load to ye assigned,

And dree your weird! Be sure ye shall not moan  
Stretched in the narrow bed, beneath the stone!

### (3)

Lo, we are mocked with fancies! And we stretch  
Our unavailing arms to anywhere  
Where help is none. The north wind will not fetch  
An answer to our cries! Nor on the air,

Fanned by the south wind's fan, is friend or aid!  
What then is left, but this—that we be brave,  
And steadfast in our places! Not afraid  
However fell our lot! And we will lave

LESS THAN DAINTILY

Us deep in human waters, till the mind  
Grows wise and kindly, and we haply steal  
A paradise from Nature. Naught can bind  
Man closer unto man than that he feel

The trouble of his comrade! So we grope  
Through courage, truth, and kindness, back to Hope.

COLLECTED POEMS

A BIRD SINGS NOW

A bird sings now;  
Merrily sings he

Of his mate on the bough,  
Of her eggs in the tree:

But yonder a hawk  
Swings out of the blue,

And the sweet song is finished  
—Is this story true?

God now have mercy  
On me, and on you!

LESS THAN DAINTILY

FROM HAWK AND KITE

Poor fluttered, frightened, silent one!  
If we had seen your nest of clay,  
We should have passed it, would have gone,  
Nor frightened you away.

Are others too must guard a nest  
From hawk, and kite, and secret foe,  
And that despair is in their breast  
Which you this moment know.

Shield the nests where'er they be!  
In the house, or in the tree!  
Guard the poor from treachery!

COLLECTED POEMS

WHAT'S THE USE

What's the use  
Of my abuse?

The world will run  
Around the sun

As it has done  
Since time begun,

When I have drifted  
To the deuce;

And what's the use  
Of my abuse!



BOOK VI  
THE GOLDEN BIRD



## BESIDES THAT

If I could get to heaven  
By eating all I could,  
I'd become a pig,  
And I'd gobble up my food!

Or, if I could get to heaven  
By climbing up a tree,  
I'd become a monkey,  
And I'd climb up rapidly!

Or, if I could get to heaven  
By any other way  
Than the way that's told of  
I'd 'a been there yesterday!

But the way that we are told of  
Bars the monkey and the pig!  
And is very, very, difficult,  
Besides that!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### IRONY

Thus spake a man in days of old:  
I will believe that God can be  
The kind, the just, that we are told,  
If he will throw down here to me  
A bag of gold—

But when his wife rose from her bed  
To see what kept her man away,  
She found him, with a broken head:  
And on the ground beside him lay  
. . . A bag of lead!

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

### THE BREATH OF LIFE

And while they talked and talked, and while they sat  
Changing their base minds into baser coin;  
And telling—they! how truth and beauty join,  
And how a certain this was good, but that  
Was baser than the viper or the toad,  
Or the blind beggar glaring down the road.

I turned from them in fury, and I ran  
To where the moon shone out upon the height,  
Down the long reaches of a summer night  
Stretching slim fingers, and the starry clan  
Grew thicker than the flowers that we see  
Clustered in quiet fields of greenery.

The quietudes that sunder star from star;  
The hazy distances of loneliness,  
Where never eagle's wing, or timid press  
Of lark or wren could venture; and the far  
Profundities untroubled and unstirred  
By any act of man or thought or word:

These held me with amazement and delight!  
I yearned up through the spaces of the sky,

## COLLECTED POEMS

Beyond the rolling clouds, beyond the high  
And delicate white moon, and up the height,  
And past the rocking stars, and out to where  
The æther failed in spaces sharp and bare.

The Breath that is the very Breath of Life  
Throbbled close to me! I heard the pulses beat,  
That lift the universes into heat!  
The slow withdrawal, and the deeper strife  
Of His wide respiration—like a sea  
It ebbd and flooded through immensity.

The Breath of Life, in wave on mighty wave!  
O moon and stars swell to a raptured song!  
Ye mountains toss the harmony along!  
O little men, with little souls to save,  
Swing up glad chauntings! Ring the skies above  
With boundless gratitude for boundless love!

Probing the ocean to its steepest drop!  
Rejoicing in the viper and the toad;  
And the blind beggar glaring down the road;  
And they, who talk and talk and never stop,  
Equally quickening! With a care to bend  
The gnat's slant wing into a swifter end.

\* \* \* \*

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

The silence clung about me like a gift!  
The tender night-time folded me around  
Protectingly! And, in a peace profound,  
The clouds drooped slowly backward, drift on drift  
Into the darkness; and the moon was gone;  
And soon the stars had vanished, every one.

But on the sky, a handsbreath in the west,  
A faint cold, radiance crept, and soared and spread;  
Until the rustling heavens overhead,  
And the grey trees, and grass, were manifest.  
Then, through the chill, a golden spear was hurled,  
And the great sun tossed laughter on the world!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### BARBARIANS

I pause beside the stream, and hear  
The waters talking on the way;  
If I had a proper ear  
I could tell you what they say!

Yon lovely tree against the sky,  
Which the sun first rests upon,  
Has a message for my eye;  
If I had a proper one!

On the golden heath a wind,  
Whispered to me as I stood;  
If I had a proper mind  
I could answer, so I could!

I am deaf and dumb and blind!  
No reply can I invent  
When a stream, a tree, a wind,  
Asks am I intelligent!



## THE GOLDEN BIRD

### ON A REED

(1)

I have a reed of oaten straw,  
I play upon it when I may;  
And the music that I draw  
Is as happy as the day.

It has seven holes, and I  
Play it high, and play it low;  
I can make it laugh, or cry,  
Can make or banish joy or woe.

Any song that you can name  
I will play it on the word;  
Old or new is all the same,  
I'm as ready as a bird.

(2)

But there is a tune, and though  
I try to play it, day and night,  
Blowing high, and blowing low,  
I can never play it right!

I know it well, without a flaw,  
The tune that yet I cannot play

COLLECTED POEMS

On my reed of oaten straw,  
Though I practice night and day!

Penny pipe, be good to me!  
And play the tune I want to play,  
Or I will smash you on a tree,  
And throw your wicked halves away!

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

### IF I HAD WINGS JUST LIKE A BIRD

If I had wings just like a bird  
I would not say a single word;  
I'd spread my wings, and fly away  
Beyond the reach of yesterday!

If I could swim just like a fish  
I'd give my little tail a swish;  
I'd swim ten days and nights, and then  
I never would be found again!

Or, if I were a comet bright,  
I'd drop in secret every night  
Ten million miles! And no one would  
Know where I kept my solitude!

But I am not a bird, or fish,  
Or comet; so I need not wish:  
And need not try to get away  
Beyond the reach of yesterday.

Damn yesterday! And this and that,  
And these and those! And all the flat,  
Dull catalogue of weighty things  
That somehow fasten to my wings!

COLLECTED POEMS

Over the pine trees, and the mountain top!  
Never to stop lifting wide wings!  
To fly, and fly, and fly  
Into the sky!

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

### THE VOICE OF GOD

I bent again unto the ground  
And I heard the quiet sound  
Which the grasses make when they  
Come up laughing from the clay.

—We are the voice of God!—they said;  
Thereupon I bent my head  
Down again that I might see  
If they truly spoke to me.

But, around me, everywhere,  
Grass and tree and mountain were  
Thundering in mighty glee,  
—We are the voice of deity!—

And I leapt from where I lay!  
I danced upon the laughing clay!  
And, to the rock that sang beside,  
—We are the voice of God!—I cried.

COLLECTED POEMS

THE FULLNESS OF TIME

On a rusty iron throne,  
Past the furthest star of space,  
I saw Satan sit alone,  
Old and haggard was his face;  
For his work was done, and he  
Rested in eternity.

And to him from out the sun  
Came his father and his friend  
Saying,—Now the work is done  
Enmity is at an end—  
And He guided Satan to  
Paradises that He knew.

Gabriel, without a frown;  
Uriel, without a spear;  
Raphael, came singing down,  
Welcoming their ancient peer;  
And they seated him beside  
One who had been crucified!

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

### HATE

My enemy came nigh;  
And I  
Stared fiercely in his face:  
My lips went writhing back in a grimace,  
And stern I watched him from a narrowed eye:

Then, as I turned away,  
My enemy,  
That bitter-heart, and savage, said to me:

—Some day, when this is past;  
When all the arrows that we have are cast;  
We may ask one another why we hate?  
And fail to find a story to relate:  
It may seem to us, then, a mystery  
That we could hate each other—  
Thus said he; and did not turn away;  
Waiting to hear what I might have to say!

But I fled quickly: fearing, if I stayed,  
I might have kissed him, as I would a maid.

## COLLECTED POEMS

### SOFT WINGS

I saw a beggar woman bare  
Her bosom to the winter air;  
And into the tender nest  
Of her famished mother-breast  
She laid her child;  
And him beguiled,  
With crooning song into his rest.

With crooning song, and tender word,  
About a little singing bird,  
That spread soft wings about her brood!  
And tore her bosom for their food!  
And sang the while,  
Them to beguile,  
All in the forest's solitude!

And, hearing this, I could not see  
That she was clad in misery!  
For in her heart there was a glow  
Warmed her bare feet in the snow!  
In her heart was hid a sun  
Would warm a world for everyone!



## THE GOLDEN BIRD

### IN WASTE PLACES

As a naked man I go  
Through the desert, sore afraid;  
Holding high my head, although  
I'm as frightened as a maid.

The lion crouches there! I saw  
In barren rocks his amber eye!  
He parts the cactus with his paw!  
He stares at me, as I go by!

He would pad upon my trace  
If he thought I was afraid!  
If he knew my hardy face  
Veils the terrors of a maid.

He rises in the night-time, and  
He stretches forth! He snuffs the air!  
He roars! He leaps along the sand!  
He creeps! He watches everywhere!

His burning eyes, his eyes of bale  
Through the darkness I can see!  
He lashes fiercely with his tail!  
He makes again to spring at me!

COLLECTED POEMS

I am the lion, and his lair!  
I am the fear that frightens me!  
I am the desert of despair!  
And the night of agony!

Night or day, whate'er befall,  
I must walk that desert land,  
Until I dare my fear, and call  
The lion out to lick my hand!

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

### THE GOLDEN BIRD

If Joy, the Golden Bird, would fly,  
Do not close an hand upon her!  
She belongeth to the sky,  
With all the winds of heaven on her:  
Only when her wings are free  
Bird of Lovely Life is she.

He who Joy of Life would store  
Heart of his be widely open;  
Throw the key out with the door,  
Throw the hope out with the hopen;  
Give her—as she finds in sky—  
Place to dip, and soar, and fly.

She will come again, I wist!  
She of thee shall not be frightened!  
She shall sing upon thy fist!  
By her shall thy dark be lighted!  
By her freedom thou art given  
Right and room in joyous heaven!

## COLLECTED POEMS

### THE TALE OF MAD BRIGID

And then  
There rung a bell  
Out of the evening air:  
One big star fell  
In a long golden flare  
Through a great stillness,  
And He was standing there.

There came a chillness  
Creeping through me slow,  
Nor could I know  
That it was truly He  
Who stood beside,  
When, lo!  
He smiled,  
And I was made to know;  
Nor hesitate  
Because of His grave kingliness and state,  
And steady eyes, and brows immaculate.

But then the weight  
Of His too sudden glory bowed me down  
Slow to the ground:  
I feared that He might frown

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

Without a sound!  
Or speak in fire!

Then He said "Sweet,"  
And I was dumb;  
I dared not come  
Because of my desire:  
And He went slow away—

And, from the grey  
Cold evening,  
Came the "tweet,"  
—Sad to my heart,  
But infinitely sweet—  
Of some late-flying wren.

COLLECTED POEMS

THE ROSE ON THE WIND

Dip and swing!  
Lift and sway!  
Dream a life  
In a dream, away!

Like a dream  
In a sleep  
Is the rose  
On the wind!

And a fish  
In the deep;  
And a man  
In the mind!

Dreaming to lack  
All that is his!  
Dreaming to gain  
All that he is!

Dreaming a life,  
In a dream, away!  
Dip and swing,  
Lift and sway!

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

### THE MERRY MUSIC

Letting the merry music stray  
In flirt of leaf, and flirt of wing  
All along a sunny way  
Intermits sweet bubbling  
Loveliness is come, and gone,  
And scarce was even looked upon!

Golden chime, and silver chime!  
Silver laughter, golden joy!  
Happy song, not come to rhyme!  
Lovely thought, that words annoy!  
Comes the dream of living—and  
Vanished is Fairy-land!

Who has drunk an air that shone,  
Or breathed on a note of gold,  
Has seen them disappearing on  
The lip that took, the lip that told:  
While—life danced on in careless way,  
Letting the merry music stray!

COLLECTED POEMS

THE PETAL OF A ROSE

Let us be quiet for a while,  
The morrow comes! Let us be still!  
Let us close our eyes and smile,  
Knowing that the morrow will

Come as certain as the sun  
Or a sorrow! Let us be  
Peaceful till this night be done!  
And we rise again to see

That the thing is not in view!  
That the memory is gone!  
That the world is made anew  
Different for every one!

Different! The morrow glows  
Where the black wings spread and brood,  
Where the petal of a rose  
Blushes in the solitude!



THE GOLDEN BIRD

ARPEGGIO

He wills to be  
Alone,  
With thee!

A stone,  
A stream,  
A sky,  
A tree!

It is  
His  
Dream  
—To be

Alone,  
With these,  
And thee!

COLLECTED POEMS

NO MORE OF WOEFUL MISERY I SING

No more of woeful Misery I sing!  
Let her go moping down the pavéd way!  
While to the sunny fields, to everything  
That laughs, and to the birds that sing,  
I pass along and tune my happy lay!  
O sunny sky!  
O meadows that the happy clouds are drifting by!

I go at ease by the easy-sliding stream  
As by a friend! I dance in solitude  
Among the trees! Or lie and gaze and dream  
Along the grass! Or hearken to the theme  
A lark discourses to her tender brood!  
O sunny sky!  
O meadows that the happy clouds are drifting by!

There is a thrush lives snugly in a wall;  
She lets me peep, unfeared, into her nest;  
She lets me see and touch the speckled ball  
Under her wing: and does not fear at all,  
Although her shy companion is distressed:  
O sunny sky!  
O meadows that the happy clouds are drifting by!

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

Sing yet, sing once again, ye birds of joy!  
Tell out from branch and bough the endless tale  
Of happiness, that nothing can annoy;  
What if your mates seem timorous and coy  
If ye sing high enough how can ye fail  
O sunny sky!  
O meadows that the happy clouds are drifting by!

On every side, far as the eye can see,  
The round horizon, like a bosom's swell,  
Seems brooding in a sweet maternity,  
Where no thing may be hurt! Not even me!  
But she will stoop and kiss and make us well!  
O sunny sky!  
O meadows that the happy clouds are drifting by!

I am the brother of each bird, and tree,  
And everything that grows—your children glad!  
Their hearts are in my heart, their ecstasy!  
O Mother of all Mothers, comfort me!  
Give me your breast for I am very sad!  
O sunny sky!  
O meadows that the happy clouds are drifting by!

COLLECTED POEMS

ON A LONELY SPRAY

Under a lonely sky a lonely tree  
Is beautiful! All that is loneliness  
Is beautiful! A feather, lost at sea;  
A staring owl; a moth; a yellow tress  
Of seaweed on a rock, is beautiful!

The night-lit moon, wide-wandering in sky!  
A blue-bright spark, where ne'er a cloud is up!  
A wing, where no wing is, it is so high!  
A bee in winter! and a buttercup,  
Late blown! are lonely, and are beautiful!

She, whom you saw but once, and saw no more!  
That he, who startled you, and went away!  
The eye that watched you from a cottage door!  
The first leaf, and the last! The break of day!  
The mouse, the cuckoo, and the cloud, are beautiful!

For all that is, is lonely! All that may  
Will be as lonely as is that you see!  
The lonely heart sings on a lonely spray!  
The lonely soul swings lonely in the sea;  
And all that loneliness is beautiful!

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

All: all alone: and all without a part  
Is beautiful! for beauty is all where!  
Where is an eye, is beauty! Where an heart,  
Is beauty, brooding out, on empty air,  
All that is lonely, and is beautiful!

COLLECTED POEMS

DEATH

Slow creatures, slow,  
Nuzzle and press,  
And take their food  
In the darkness!

No stir is now  
In all that once was all!  
No dream; no sound;  
No sight; no sense, is there!

Unseen, the beam of the sun!  
Unknown, the ring of the light!  
Unknown, in the cave!  
Unseen, by the slow, slow, hungers!

Naught's left  
—But food!  
All else, that was,  
Is away!

—Far away  
In the Gleam!  
In the Ring!  
In the Beam!  
In the Sun!

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

### THE CREST JEWEL

(1)

The leaf will wrinkle to decay,  
And crumble into dust away!

The rose, the lily, grow to eld,  
And are, and are no more, beheld!

Nothing will stay! For, as the eye  
Rests upon an object nigh,

It is not there to look upon!  
It is mysteriously gone!

And, in its place, another thing  
Apes its shape and fashioning!

(2)

All that the sun will breath to-day  
The moon will lip and wear away

To-night! And all will re-begin  
To-morrow as the dawn comes in!

COLLECTED POEMS

Is no beginning, middle-trend,  
Or argument to that, or end!

No cause and no effect, and no  
Reason why it should be so!

Or why it might be otherwise  
To other minds, or other eyes!

(3)

The soul can dream itself to be  
Adrift upon an endless sea

Of day and night! The soul can seem  
To be all things that it can dream!

Yet needs but look within to find  
That which is steady in the wind!

That which the fire does not appal!  
Which good and ill move not at all!

Which does not seek, or lack, or try!  
And was not born, and cannot die!

(4)

It has been writ in wisdom old—  
This is the last word to be told:



THE GOLDEN BIRD

—There is no dissolution! No  
Creation! There are none in woe!

There is no teacher, teaching, taught!  
Are none who long for, lack for aught!

Are none who pine for freedom! None  
Are liberated under sun!

—And this is absolutely true  
In Him who dreams in me and you.

## COLLECTED POEMS

### THY SOUL

Young Nachiketas went to Death!  
He bargained with the Monarch grim  
For Knowledge, as the Katha saith,  
And Death revealed the Soul to him!  
And who learns with the fearless lad  
Hath All that Nachiketas had.

Death said:—

From That the sun and moon arise;  
They set in That again:  
From That are seas, and stars, and skies,  
And trees, and beasts, and men:  
And That of Soul is This of Sense;  
Between Them is no difference.

All that is Here, the same is There;  
All that is There, is Here:  
There is no difference Anywhere;  
The One doth All appear!  
From death to death he goes, who sees  
Differences, or Degrees.

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

That which is told of, That Thou Art,  
There is no other Sprite;  
No heaven, nor earth, nor middle part,  
There is no day, or night;  
There is no beauty, truth, or wit,  
But That alone! And Thou Art It!

He dreameth—I am moon, and sun;  
I am the earth, and sea;  
I am the strife, the lost, the won;  
I am Variety—  
He dreameth This, and That, and Thou,  
In past, and future time, and now!

He is the Dreamer, and the Dream!  
He is the Frightened, and the Fear!  
He is the Hope! the Gloom! the Gleam!  
He is the Season, and the Year!  
—He is not This, nor That, nor You:  
He is Thyself! And Thou Art, One!

He will not be obtained by speech;  
Not by the mind, the ear, the eye:  
He cometh, in His time, to each  
Who Him affirm, courageously:  
Thou Art! He is! And that is all  
That may be told, or can befall!

COLLECTED POEMS

Fast not, nor pray! But only know,  
He Is—I am—And all is done!  
The Deed of Time is finished! Lo,  
Thy Self to Thine own Self art won!  
Thou shalt not seek, nor have, reply,  
For Thou Art That, in blink of eye.

Thou knew it all! 'Twas hid within  
Thy Memory! Call but to mind  
This, that Thou Art, and Death nor Sin  
Shall conquer Thee again! Nor bind  
Thine action! Nor make Thee to seem  
A Dreamer, living in a Dream!

Awake!  
Arise!  
Put glory on,  
Of which all Soul and Sense is wrought!  
Thou shalt be naught Thou dreamed upon  
Of good or evil Thing! Nor aught  
That thought doth bicker at!  
Thou shalt be Naught!  
And Thou shalt be  
Thy Self, and Thine own Mystery!  
Knowledge! Bliss! Eternity!  
For Thou Art That!

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

### THE PIT OF BLISS

(1)

When I was young  
I dared to sing  
Of everything,  
And anything!  
Of joy, and woe, and fate, and God!  
Of dreaming cloud, and teeming sod!  
Of hill, that thrust an amber spear  
Into the sunset! And the sheer  
Precipice that shakes the soul  
To its black gape—I sang the whole  
Of God and Man, nor sought to know  
Man, or God, or Joy, or Woe!  
And, though an older wight I be,  
My soul hath still such Ecstasy  
That, on a pulse, I sing and sing  
Of Everything, and Anything!

(2)

There is a Light  
Shines in the head:  
It is not gold,  
It is not red,

## COLLECTED POEMS

But, as the lightning's blinding light,  
It is a stare of silver white  
That one surmise might fancy blue!  
On that mind-blinding hue I gaze  
An instant, and am in a maze  
Of thinking—could one call it so?  
It is no thinking that I know!  
—An hurricane of Knowing, that  
Could whelm the soul that was not pat  
To flinch, and lose the deadly thing;  
—And Sing, and Sing again, and Sing  
Of Everything, and Anything!

### (3)

An Eagle  
Whirling up the sky;  
Sunblind! Dizzy!  
Urging high,  
And higher beating yet a wing,  
Until he can no longer cling,  
Or hold; or do a thing, but fall,  
And sink, and whirl, and scream, through all  
His dizzy, heaven-hell of Pit,  
In mile-a-minute flight from It  
That he had dared! From height of height,  
So the Poet takes his flight

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

And tumble in the Pit of Bliss!  
And, in the roar of that Abyss,  
And falling, he will Sing and Sing  
Of Everything, and Anything!

(4)

What is Knowing?  
'Tis to see!  
What is Feeling?  
'Tis to be!  
What is Love? But, more and more,  
To See and Be! To be a Pour  
And Avalanche of Being, till  
Being ceases, and is still  
For very motion—What is Joy?  
—Being, past all earthly cloy  
And intermixture! Being spun  
Of Itself is Being won  
That is Joy—And this is God,  
To be That, in cloud and clod!  
And, in cloud, and clod, to Sing  
Of Everything, and Anything!





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